

# A Day in the One Room School

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**Teacher Orientation Packet**  
**Ushers Ferry Historic Village**  
**2016**

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### Connections to Iowa Core Curriculum:

SS.3-5.E.5 Understand that advancing technologies impact the global economy. (*Hoovers, p. 17-18 and Tokheim p. 19-20*).

SS.3-5.E.6 Understand that all economies throughout the world rely upon universal concepts. (*Snoble, General Store p. 12-13*)

SS.3-5.G.1 Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments. (*Town Hall Map exercise, p. 27-28*)

SS.3-5.G.3 Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations. (Ushers, Snoble, Town Hall)

SS.3-5.H.1 Understand historical patterns, periods of time and the relationships among these elements. (Early Pioneers and Immigrant migration)

SS.3-5.H.2 Understand how and why people create, maintain, or change systems of power, authority, and governance. (Town Hall/ Township government)

SS.3-5.H.3 Understand the role of culture and cultural diffusion on the development and maintenance of societies. (*Hoovers, Tokheim, Snoble/Rubek, Miller*)

SS.3-5.H.4 Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo. (Thompson, Tokheim, )

SS.3-5.H.5 Understand the effect of economic needs and wants on individual and group decisions.

SS.3-5.H.6 Understand the effects of geographic factors on historical events. (Township Map exercise)

SS.3-5.H.7 Understand the role of innovation on the development and interaction of societies. (Hoover / Tokheim)

SS.3-5.H.8 Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand cause and effect relationships and other historical thinking skills in order to interpret events and issues.

SS.3-5.PSCL.1 Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action. (Hoover, Usher)

SS.3-5.PSCL.4 Understand the differences among local, state and national government.

## Pre-Visit Checklist

The Ushers Ferry One Room School program is an interactive role-playing tour that allows students to connect with local history on a more personal and intimate basis by allowing them to step into the life of a real child who would have lived in or been associated with one of the buildings preserved at Ushers Ferry. In order for your students to receive the best experience and make a meaningful connection with history during their visit, we strongly recommend you review and complete the following steps:

### Before You Arrive

Your students will have some homework due when they show up for class in the country school! Please review and complete the “One Room School Homework Assignment” with your class before arriving at Ushers Ferry, including:

- Assigning each student a role-playing character and providing them with the biography information on their families.
- Reading the first half of the Story “Why the Sea is Salt” (included in this packet).
- Review the sample spelling words included in this packet. –Many of these words are in the story and will be used in the spelling bee activity.
- Select games from the list for children to learn and play at recess time

### On the Day of Your Tour:

1. We would like you to arrive as close to 9:30 as possible. Our usual tour times are 9:30-1:30 with lunch being from 11:15-12:00. We can be flexible with your tour times if you let us know ahead of time.
2. If your bus is leaving please leave your lunches and backpacks at the Pavilion. In the event of inclement weather, lunch may be eaten inside the Township Hall, which has heat and electricity.
3. Bathrooms and a drinking fountain are available inside the village behind the Hotel and Pavilion building.
4. Garbage and recycling: Garbage cans are available at the pavilion and recycling bins are also on hand for pop cans and plastic water or soda bottles. Please make sure that students completely empty their cans and bottles before putting them in the recycling bins, otherwise we must throw out the entire bag. If students have purchased Sarsaparilla or root beer from the Saloon, Brown recycling stations may be found at the Pavilion, General Store and Township Hall. Just look for the picture of the Sarsaparilla Kid!

5. Many of our schools allow their students to bring a couple of dollars along to spend in the General Store. It is, however, entirely up to the teacher to select this option. We do ask that both classes choose the same option. If you are planning on purchasing, please inform the staff member who greets you in the morning. If you are purchasing, here's how it works. The group that is touring the Village in the morning will go to the General Store at 11:00. That way they can do their purchasing before the students from the school arrive at 11:15. The touring students should be finished- or nearly finished at least- before the school students arrive. The school students should finish purchasing before they eat their lunch. The students who toured in the morning should be ready to go to the school house promptly at 12:00. If a few extra minutes are needed for the afternoon touring students to finish eating and using the restroom that is fine. Restrooms are in the parking lot and behind the Hotel. A limited number of bottles of Root Beer, Sarsaparilla, and Cream Soda are for sale in the Saloon for \$2 a bottle. If everyone in the class will be purchasing soda, please let us know in advance.
6. When touring the buildings, you may break down into as many groups as you have adults. You may want to divide your groups by family. To make the most of your visit, it is important that the students have time before the tour to learn about their new families and the part they play in it and in the town. This way, they can show their friends around their homes, work, and favorite places.
7. Please know that school tours are held rain or shine. In the unlikely event of a tornado warning the students should move quickly to the restrooms behind the Village Hotel.
8. If you need to reach someone at the Ushers Ferry, please call the Village Office 319-286-5763. First aid kits are at the Visitor's Center.

Have a great time as you learn history by living it!

## **One Room School Homework Assignment:**

### **Manners First! One Room School Rules and Etiquette**

1. SILENCE is golden! Students should not be talking unless called upon to answer a question.
2. Students who wish to ask or answer a question must raise their hand.
3. If a student has been called upon to answer a question, they must stand up beside their desk and then answer the question so that the rest of the class can see and hear them clearly.
4. Students should not squirm or fidget in their seats, as this may disrupt the student studying behind or in front of them.
5. Gentlemen (and boys) must remove their hats when inside the building!
6. Students are expected to help keep the school room clean and neat. At the end of the day students must help pick up, sweep and dust and clean the schoolroom. Boys may be sent to bring in firewood for the next day.
7. If the teacher is busy with another student, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are expected to help younger students who may be having trouble with their work.
8. Students who break the rules can expect consequences!

9. The school house teacher will act as a school house teacher from 110 years ago. Please let your students know this will be the case, and that they should expect different rules from the teacher.

### **Story: Why the Sea is Salt**

Please have your students read the following section of the story “Why the Sea is Salt.” Upon their arrival for their one room school tour, they will stand and read aloud the ending of the story from the McGuffey Readers, and discuss it with their country school teacher as they try to discern what lesson or moral the author is trying to relate to them through the story. Reading selections chosen for children’s school books during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth centuries were selected as much for their lessons in morality as they were for their vocabulary and literary value.

### **Spelling Words from the Story**

Please have the students study these words from the story before their visit, as they will be included in the Schoolhouse Spelling Bee.

1. Trifling: of small value.
2. Hand mill: a mill for grinding coffee that is turned by hand.
3. Attracted: drawn to, allured.
4. Perplexed: puzzled.
5. Fragrance: sweetness of smell.
6. Astonished: greatly surprised
7. Devoutly: in a reverent manner.
8. Reflecting: throwing back light, heat, etc. as a mirror.
9. Landmark: an object on land, serving as a guide to seamen.
10. Extraordinary: wonderful.
11. Peasants: those belonging to the lowest class of farmers in Europe.

## Why the Sea is Salt (A Danish Fairy Tale)

There were, in very ancient times, two brothers, one of whom was rich, and the other poor. Christmas was approaching, but the poor man had nothing in the house for a Christmas dinner; so he went to his brother and asked him for a trifling gift.

The rich man was ill natured, and when he heard his brother's request he looked very surly. But as Christmas is a time when even the worst people give gifts, he took a fine ham down from the chimney, where it was hanging to smoke, threw it at his brother, and bade him be gone and never to let him see his face again.

The poor man thanked his brother for the ham, put it under his arm, and went his way. He had to pass through a great forest on his way home. When he had reached the thickest part of it, he saw an old man, with a long, white beard, hewing timber. "Good evening," said he to him.

"Good evening," returned the old man. "You are lucky that you have met with me. If you will take that ham into the land of the dwarfs, the entrance to which lies just under the roots of this tree, you can make a capital bargain with it; for the dwarfs are very fond of ham, and rarely get any. But mind what I say: you must not sell it for money, but demand for it the 'old hand mill which stands behind the door.' When you come back, I'll show you how to use it."

The poor man thanked his new friend, who showed him the door under a stone below the roots of the tree, and by this door he entered into the land of the dwarfs. No sooner had he set his foot in it, than the dwarfs swarmed about him, attracted by the smell of the ham. They offered him queer, old fashioned money and gold and silver ore for it; but he refused all their tempting offers, and said that he would sell it only for the old hand mill behind the door.

At this, the dwarfs held up their little old hands, and looked quite perplexed. "We cannot make a bargain, it seems," said the poor man, "so I'll bid you all a good day."

The fragrance of the ham had by this time reached the remote parts of dwarf land. The dwarfs came flocking around in little troops, leaving their work of digging out precious ores, eager for the ham.

“Let him have the old mill,” said some of the newcomers; “it is quite out of order, and he don’t know how to use it. Let him have it, and we will have the ham.”

So the bargain was made. The poor man took the old hand mill, which was a little thing not half so large as the ham, and went back to the woods. Here the old man showed him how to use it. All this had taken up a great deal of time, and it was midnight before he reached home.

“Where in the world have you been?” said his wife. “Here I have been waiting and waiting, and we have no wood to make a fire, nor anything to put into the porridge pot for our Christmas supper.”

The house was dark and cold; but the poor man bade his wife wait and see what would happen. He placed the little hand mill on the table, and began to turn the crank. First, out there came some grand, lighted wax candles, and a fire on the hearth, and a porridge pot boiling over it, because in his mind he said they should come first. Then he ground out a tablecloth, and dishes, and spoons, and knives and forks.

So they had a merry Christmas Eve and morning. He was himself astonished at his good luck, as you may believe; and his wife was almost beside herself with joy and astonishment. Well, they had a capital supper; and after it was eaten, they ground out of the mill every possible thing to make their house and themselves warm and comfortable.

## Role Playing Characters

### Teacher Instructions for Role-Playing:

1. Cut up the sheet of names, ages and grades. Separate the boys' names from the girls' names and have the students in your class draw for them accordingly.
2. The slip of paper will tell them their name, what family they are in, how old they are and what grade they are going to be in at the one-room school.
3. Students should then break up into groups according to their families. In their families they will compare ages to see who is oldest, youngest, etc... Then they will talk about what it is like to live in their family, according to the information they have. Each student should write a paragraph or two about life in their family, the things they like to do, the chores they must do, how they get along with their brothers and sisters, how they like school, etc. During the one-room school, the teacher will ask questions of the students about their life and families. This will give them information they can use to respond to those questions.
4. It will be important to look at the ages of the children. How do the jobs of older children differ from those of the younger children? Why are some of the boys much older than what we would think a seventh or eighth grader should be? Is it because they are not smart? Or might there be another reason?
5. For the day of the tour, please have the students wear nametags with their **characters' names and grades** on them in large letters.

### Optional Pre-visit Activities:

- Children might start a diary or write a story about their character, writing about their daily chores or activities, siblings, current events, and what they think about them. This journal could be continued to include their day in the school and events that happen after.
- Children may read books from the selected bibliography and write about how their character compared to the character in the books. Did the characters in the books influence the way they thought about themselves as being children 100 years ago?

### Role Playing Characters (Girls)

Agnes Tokheim Age 8 Grade 3	Beulah Usher Age 11 Grade 6	Minnie Thompson Age 10 Grade 5	Anna Pohorsky** Age 13 Grade 7	Anna Snoble Age 7 Grade 1
Bessie Hoover Age 8 Grade 3	Pleasant Thompson Age 12 Grade 6	Ada Thompson Age 13 Grade 7	Ida Thompson* Age 10 Grade 5	
Katheryne Miller Age 6 Grade 1	Loretta Houseman Age 9 *** Grade 4	Pearl Hoover Age 14 Grade 8	Annie Holubar Age 7 Grade 2	
Florence Usher Age 8 Grade 3	Mamie Rubek Age 12 Grade 7	Leah Hoover Age 12 Grade 6	Olive Thompson* Age 6 Grade 1	

## Role Playing Characters – Boys

Warren Thompson* Age 5 Grade: K	Charlie Thompson Age 14 Grade 8	Ted Hoover Age 11 Grade 5	John Thompson Age 9 Grade 4	George Thompson Age 14 Grade 8
Henry Usher Age 6 Grade 1	James Hoover Age 9 Grade 4	George Tokheim Age 15 **** Grade 8	Joe Snoble Age 10 Grade 3	Frank Snoble Age 14 Grade 6
Ralph Hoover Age 7 Grade 2	Nils Tokheim**** Age 11 Grade 5	Benjamin Pohorsky Age 12 ** Grade 8	Carl Hoover Age 13 Grade 7	Clarence Houseman Age 11 *** Grade 5

## Family Biographies

### The Usher Family

**Parents:** Henry P. & Mary Usher

**Father's Occupation:** Blacksmith / Sawmill Operator

**Children:** Beulah, Florence, Henry & Cousins Loretta & Clarence Houseman

**Home:** The white house across from the school



*Great Grandparents Henry A. and Mariah Usher first came to Iowa in the 1850's. They built the house you now live in.*

Your great grandparents, Henry and Mariah Usher came here from Ohio shortly after your grandfather's cousin Dyer (or Uncle Dye, as the family calls him) claims and started his ferryboat operation here in Linn County. Great grandfather Henry had owned a sawmill back in Ohio, and was also a very good blacksmith. He settled first in Iowa City, and opened one of the first blacksmith shops in that town. He is said to have even helped with the construction of the Old Capitol building. When he finally came to Linn County, a few years after his cousins had settled here, he decided to build a house on the river, right next to Dyer's ferry.

Since the Blair family started a new ferry across the river a few miles to the north, not too many people used Ushers Ferry anymore, and fewer customer's came down the road past the sawmill and blacksmith shop. Eventually, great-grandfather Henry decided to take up farming, and the farm passed to your grandfather, Joseph. Aunt Alta Houseman and her family lived in it for a while, and then she and your father decided to trade houses, so you moved to the family farmhouse



*Henry P., Beulah, Florence and Mary Usher, circa 1920.*

built by your great-grandfather, and Aunt Alta and her family moved to your house in town. Farming means a lot of work for the whole family, and because Beulah and Florence don't have any brothers to help with the field work, Aunt Alta has decided to let cousins Clarence and Loretta stay on the farm with you and help out for a short while to teach Florence and Beulah how to do the chores.

Clarence has been teaching Beulah how to drive the work horses on the plow or cultivator to help with field work. This is important for Beulah to know, as she will also have to drive the horse and buggy to school!

Loretta has been helping Florence learn how to take care of the chickens, feed the sheep, and milk the cows. Every week you will take eggs to



*Loretta's brother, Cousin Clarence, has been teaching Beulah how to drive the work horses in the field.*

*Beulah (Right) has been getting pretty good at driving the work team on the cultivator to help with spring planting.*

market to sell, and once a week, on your way to school, you will have to deliver milk and cream to the dairy to sell. Some of that money will be yours to use! The girls will also have a lot of cooking to do, helping to get breakfast ready before school and supper after school. All of the children sleep upstairs in the attic. Beulah, Florence and Loretta all share one big old four poster bed, and Clarence sleeps on a small cot at the other end of the room. Your parents have the bedroom downstairs.

Your great-grandfather Henry donated the land that the school is built on and he also provided lumber from his sawmill to build it. You might also be going school here in the same room with not only your brothers and sisters, but also your cousins: Henry, John, James, Alice, Nancy, and Julia Ann, so you'd better behave yourself or your parents are sure to find out about it!



*Beulah and Florence with their cousin Loretta Houseman (center).*



## The Snoble Family

**Parents:** Frank & Mary

**Father's Occupation:** Farmer (Immigrants)

**Children:** Frank (Jr.), Joe, Anna

**Home:** The Snoble House

Your family has recently come to America from a small village in Czechoslovakia. Life was very hard in the little village where you were born. Farming was very poor, and people often did not have enough to eat, or even money to buy what you needed to live. To make things even worse, your country was under the rule of a foreign country, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Emperor demanded that every man 18 years of age must serve in his army and fight in his wars – wars that your people often didn't understand, or support.



Since your older brother Frank, is 16 and will soon have to serve in the Emperor's army, your family decided to come to America. Your uncle has already moved there, and has written your parents that life is much better in America. Life is much better, but it is also very frightening. Your oldest brother Vaclav (Czech for James) had already been drafted into the army and was supposed to go fight in a war the Austro-Hungarian Empire was fighting with Turkey. Worried that he might be killed, your parents gave him money to run away from the army, and he escaped to America. They decided to follow soon after.



When you first came to America, you settled first in Texas. Frank and Joe went first with your older sister Mary to meet Jim, who already had a job in the coal mines. You four children were responsible for finding the family a place to live and setting up housekeeping while your parents finished selling their land and property in Bohemia, arriving six months later with little Anna. Without your parents there with you to earn money for the family, all of the children had to work. Mary took a job in town and Jim, Frank and even Joe, who was only 6 worked long days in the coal mines to make enough money for food and clothing and rent. By the time your parents arrived from Bohemia, Mary had become very sick from the ague (a fever many catch from mosquitos that live in the warm swampy east Texas climate), and your parents decided to move the family north to a cooler climate away from the ague sickness. Your father had been very busy talking to other Czech immigrants on the steamship during his voyage from Germany to Texas, and they gave him the names of several friendly Czech businessmen scattered all over the United States who would help new immigrants settle into their local community. One of the more northern cities where he could find such assistance was Cedar Rapids, so your father packed the family up and moved to Iowa.

Your parents were able to buy a little 12 acre farm here in the valley where they could own their own land and raise their own food. The climate and land here is very similar to where your family came from in Bohemia, and it was very easy for your father to raise all the crops he used to grow in the old country. He keeps goats, chickens, a pig, and 100 hives of bees. He grows melons and tomatoes and potatoes and cabbage, turnips, and beets and onions and has a big orchard, too. His fruit trees produce apples, and pears, cherries, and plums.



(That's the real reason why he has so many bee hives, not for the honey, but to pollinate the fruit trees so they will produce fruit. Plus he can sell the honey, too!). He also grows grapes, raspberries, rhubarb and asparagus. He has hops vines growing all over his garden fence that he uses to brew his own beer. He makes pretty good wine, too!

All in all, your parents have been able to almost completely recreate their life in Bohemia right here in the middle of Iowa. They have a farm almost the same size as the one they left behind, and they can grow all of the same crops. Even the fact that they don't speak any English has not been too big of a barrier for them. Every week, your father loads all of the food he has grown on the farm onto his wagon and drives his horse into Cedar Rapids. Instead of going to the farmers markets, where he might have a hard time understanding English speaking customers, he drives his horse up and down the streets of Bever or Grand Avenues, lined with wealthy homes and calls out in Czech all that he has to sell. Many of the domestic servant girls who work in those homes speak Czech, and they come running out to meet him and buy the food he has to sell. Often he takes Mary or Anna with him to help, and always manages to sell everything he brings to town. Your mother also does not speak any English, but as a girl in Bohemia, she grew up in an orphanage and was also taught to speak German so that she might be able to be a maid or serving girl in one of the wealthier homes in Austria, along the Bohemian border. She speaks German well enough to get along with German speaking neighbors like Mrs. Miller, and she is always able to trade with Czech merchants like Mr. Rubek for things that she needs.

But for all that your parents have not had the time or the need to learn English immediately, they think it is very important that all of you children learn to read, write and speak English. If you want to become citizens, you will have to pass a citizenship test, and they want to make sure that you do. Although you have immigrated to America, you do not yet have the full rights of citizenship, and life was hard enough in Bohemia that your parents want to make sure you all become American citizens so that you won't have to go back.

As you will see, your house is very small and simple. Two bedrooms, a kitchen and living room. –Not very much room for of the children to sleep in! But not all of you were living there, either. Your oldest brother and sister, Jim and Mary, got married and stayed in Texas. Frank and Joe share the big double bed off the living room and Anna sleeps on a small cot in your parents room. When Frank and Joe are old enough, they will probably be apprenticed out to work on a farm or in a store as hired boys for room and board, and then their bedroom will become Anna's.

## The Thompson Family

**Parents:** Warren C. & Anna

**Father's Occupation:** Minister of the Free Methodist Church

**Children:** Sherman, George & Charlie, John, Ada, Pleasant, Martha

**Grand Children:** Ida and Olive

**Home:** The house across from the church

Your father brought his family here shortly after he finished building the new church across the street. Before he raised the money to build the church, your father was known as quite the orator and was more than willing to speak his mind.. Needless to say, everybody knows Reverend Thompson. That can be good or bad for you, because your father doesn't think quite like other people, and he is a bit of a radical reformer.

Before he was a preacher, or even a convert to religion, your father grew up on Iowa's rough and wild frontier. He had quite a temper, gambled, frequented saloons, used rough language, got into lots of fights, and all sorts of trouble. He was not at all the sort of man you would expect to become a preacher. His marriage to your mother and the death of his own mother while he was still a young man eventually convinced him of the need to change his ways. He saw what a terrible toll the rough ways he and his father lived by had taken on the women of his family, and believed that the only way to save them was to change his own sinful ways.

A chance meeting with a backwoods pioneer preacher a short time later, and the sudden and the surprising religious conversion of one of his closest and equally rough living friends caused him to reflect upon his own life and his mother's dying words to him:

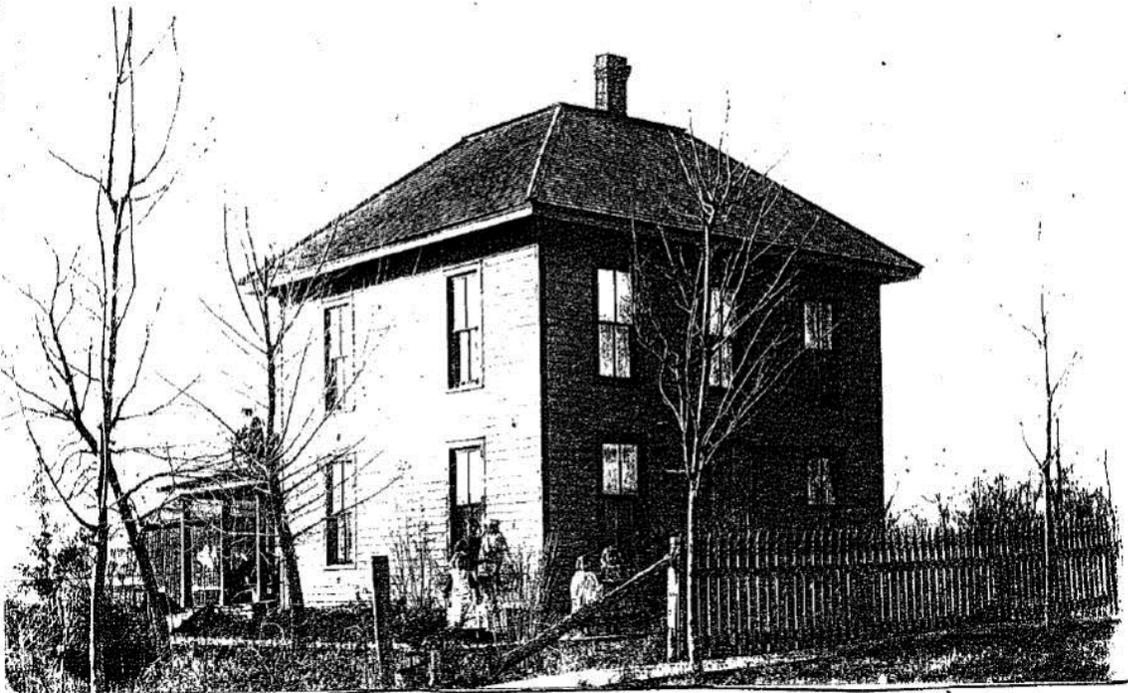
"Yours has been a life and training nothing but God can undo."

Reverend Thompson's own path to religious conversion was not easy, but with the support of his wife, his newly converted friend and by his own admission, a lot of awkward prayer, he finally found himself on a new path in life. He and his friend Hollenbeck started holding prayer meetings, and were quickly attracted to the beliefs of Free Methodism.

Free Methodists are called "Free," because they were anti-slavery, believing all men should be free. Likewise, they did not believe in the common practice of selling or renting pews in that time, believing that all seating in a church should be free as well. Finally, they hoped for Freedom of the Holy Spirit in their services rather than the very staid and formal services of other church denominations. They were strong supporters of the Temperance movement, believing alcohol brought too many people nothing but misery and destruction. All of these things appealed to Reverend Thompson, whose family had suffered poverty and hardship because of alcohol, and who had witnessed first-hand the cruelty of slavery while working in Texas as a young man.



*Reverend Warren C. Thompson, founder of the Oak Hill Free Methodist Church.*



*If the Parsonage seems a little small for so many brothers and sisters, you have to remember your oldest brother, Sherman, was already grown and married with children of his own. The Thompson family home was actually this one, located in Marion. The Parsonage at Ushers Ferry is similar to the size of a house Reverend Thompson lived in when he was "called" away for a year to serve in another town. It is likely that during that time, some of the boys might have stayed with Sherman's family, while the girls would have gone to the new congregation with your parents. Ida Thompson is standing to the left of her mother and Olive is on the far right.*

It wasn't long before his prayer meetings grew in size, and he was invited to speak at other prayer meetings around the city. Before long, he was preaching to over 1500 people in the streets of Cedar Rapids, and in no time at all they had raised the money to build the church that now stands at Ushers Ferry.

Even though your father has finally gotten the church built, he won't be able to settle down to preach there. The Free Methodists are very much a working congregation, and your father will have to travel a great deal to Methodist conferences to meet with ministers and delegates from other congregations and help appoint new bishops and church leaders as well as make decisions on other church business. In fact, there is talk that he may be sent away for a year or so to serve another parish, and your mother is very worried because it doesn't pay very much and he isn't in the best of health to be doing all the preaching and traveling that he does. Your father has built many Free Methodist Churches in Linn

County, including the one here at Ushers Ferry (which was first located in the Oak Hill area of Cedar Rapids, he also built Free Methodist Churches at Marion, Walker and Toddville. –Which of course means he has to travel a lot!

## *Established Church*



Pictured above is the Rev. Warren C. Thompson, founder of the Free Methodist church in Marion, and a leader in that denomination in Iowa. He was born December 20, 1844. Organizing the church here in 1878, he remained pastor for two years before going to Walker to organize a church. He died in Marion April 20, 1914.

With your father gone so much on church business, your mother has a lot of work to do, taking care of you and your brothers and sisters. There have been eleven children born in your family, but only seven of you are still living. Sherman is the oldest and already married with two children of his own, Ida and Olive. George and Charlie are twins. That is still a lot of people to cook and clean and for, which means that you will have a lot of work to do too. You girls will help with the cooking and cleaning, while the boys will have to split a lot of firewood to keep the fires going. Your father doesn't make a lot of money, usually only about eighteen dollars a month, which means that he has to support your entire family for as little as sixty cents a day! This certainly doesn't leave much money for extras like new pens or books or clothes for school, so you are going to have to be very careful to take care of the things that you have.

Your family is Free Methodist, which will affect every part of your life. Your church frowns on showy clothing and worldly activities. You wear very plain, simple clothing and lead a simple lifestyle, not only because it is considered frivolous, but because on your father's poor salary, you can't afford to spend much on fancy things! Much of your time is spent at church, with Sunday services lasting all day. Sunday school starts at 10, followed by a morning service, lunch, an afternoon service, dinner, and an evening service of singing and testimonies. On Wednesday nights, your house will be filled with people as your parents regularly have folks from the congregation over for a prayer meeting. With so much going on, it's sometimes hard to sleep or get your homework done.

Charlie helps earn money for the family by working in in the newspaper office, delivering papers. George, on the other hand keeps busy tending the garden and growing lots of vegetables to help feed the family. When he isn't busy in your own garden, he sometimes hires out around town doing odd jobs and yard work for Doctor Miller, pruning his bushes, tending Dr. Miller's garden and mowing his lawn. Dr. Miller even has a reel mower he lets George use. It's quite the work out!

## The Hoover Family

**Parents:** James A. and Charlotte (Cronk)

**Occupation:** Owners of the Local Telephone Cooperative

**Children:** Pearl, Carl, Leah, Frances, Ted, James, Ralph and Bessie

**Grandma:** Amy Kramer Cronk

**Home:** Blue house with wrap around porch, next to yellow house

Your family runs one of the newest business enterprises in town –the local telephone cooperative. Many of your friends and neighbors are skeptical about this “new-fangled” technology, but your father is sure that it is going to be the wave of the future and that soon everyone will have a telephone in their homes and businesses, not to mention electric lights! In fact, your house is one of the first homes in town to be wired with electric lights, because you need electricity to run the telephone switchboard. It’s very exciting to have the new telephone switchboard in your house, (your mother has even talked to another operator as far away as New York City!) but it’s also a lot of work. The switchboard has to be watched 24 hours a day, which means that all of you children will have to take turns sleeping downstairs at night on the sofa beside the switchboard in case someone should have to make an emergency telephone call in the middle of the night.



**Back Row:** Ted, Jim, Bess, John, Carl, Ralph, Leah, Pearl, Frances

**Front:** Parents James A. & Charlotte Hoover.



*Pearl holding little brother Ralph at the new house in town.*

The Telephone Cooperative is only one of the many jobs your father has; he always seems to find many things to do! In addition to organizing the new Telephone system, has worked as a carpenter, and he has just taken on the management of the family farm your mother grew up on now that it is too much for Grandma Amy to manage and she has had to move to town. He is quite a good farmer, growing crops and raising hogs. As if that weren’t enough to keep him busy, he is very active in the Township government and has served in three different positions on the Township board. He has been a school director for the Township, and helped to organize and build two of the townships country schools. As a trustee, he oversaw many of the big decisions made by the Township, and now, as an Assessor, he is responsible for setting and collecting property taxes for the Township to support the Township

schools, roads, cemeteries and other Township business.

When the boys aren't busy out on the farm, feeding the hogs and helping your father put the crops in in the spring and harvest them in the fall, they are probably quite busy helping your father install new telephones and keeping the telephone lines working. New telephone poles have to be sunk, and in places where you haven't had time to put them up yet, you and your father string the lines along fences, though trees, and anywhere you can get them off the ground. After every storm you have to go out, even in the middle of winter, and fix the lines that have broken or blown down. Because you have to help install and repair the telephones, you have to know all about how they work and what could go wrong with them and how to fix them.

The girls will help mother at the switchboard, connecting calls. While that doesn't sound very interesting at first, you should remember that your phone is connected to everyone else's in town. After you connect their calls, you should hang up your headset and not listen. But you, and everyone else in town, often listen in on other people's calls. You are one of the most informed people in town, and usually know what everyone is up to. Sometimes you have to run the warning ring on the switchboard to let people know if there is a fire, an accident, or a tornado. With such a big family and so many little brothers and sisters, when you aren't helping your parents, you are either baby sitting or helping take care of Grandma Amy.



*Grandma Amy Kramer Cronk was a baby when her family settled in the Iowa Territory. You can read about her childhood in her brother Isaac's book, "A Prairie Almanac: 1839-1919."*



*1907 class picture taken at the Sandridge School, built by Mr. Hoover.*

**Back Row:** Carl and Ted.

**Front Row:** Leah, Francis and Jim

## The Tokheim Family

**Parents:** John & Senva

**Father's Occupation:** Owns Hardware Store and Machine Shop

**Children:** Agnes and her cousin's: George and Nils Tokheim.

**Home:** Living at the Hotel

Your father owns and operates a factory in town. Like the Snoble family, he also immigrated to America when he was 16 years old. John came from the country of Norway. Can you find that on a map? He worked on his brother's farm to pay for his passage to America, and went to country school during the winter so that he could learn to read and write English. It seems like your father is always reading and studying. As a young man, after working all day in a hardware store in



*John's wife, Senva.*

Thor, Iowa, he used to study late into the night until he trained himself to be a draftsman. Eventually, he earned enough money to pay for attending a few months of classes at a local business college, and he owned his own hardware store. Now he has moved to Ushers Ferry to start a factory to manufacture the inventions he has been tinkering with. Your family is building a house, and until it is finished you are living at the Fairview Hotel.

When your father isn't reading, he is tinkering. He always has some new idea for how to make things work better. Lately he's been tinkering with the well pumps and the gasoline and

kerosene that he sold in his old store. He didn't like having to store the gasoline and kerosene that he sold in those steel drums in the back of his storeroom. They're very messy, and the kerosene keeps leaking out and soaking into the floor. He often worried that some night a spark from the stove might catch it on fire and burn down the whole building! He told your mother that he has an idea for a better way to

store the kerosene and gasoline –in big tanks underground. He thinks that he can take some parts from the water well pumps that he sells and make a new pump that he can use to pump the gasoline out of those underground storage tanks. He even has an idea for a way to make the pump measure out how much gas you need! If he can get it to work, he intends to send his design off to the patent office in Washington D.C. and then open a factory to build more of these new gasoline pumps so he can sell them to other storekeepers.



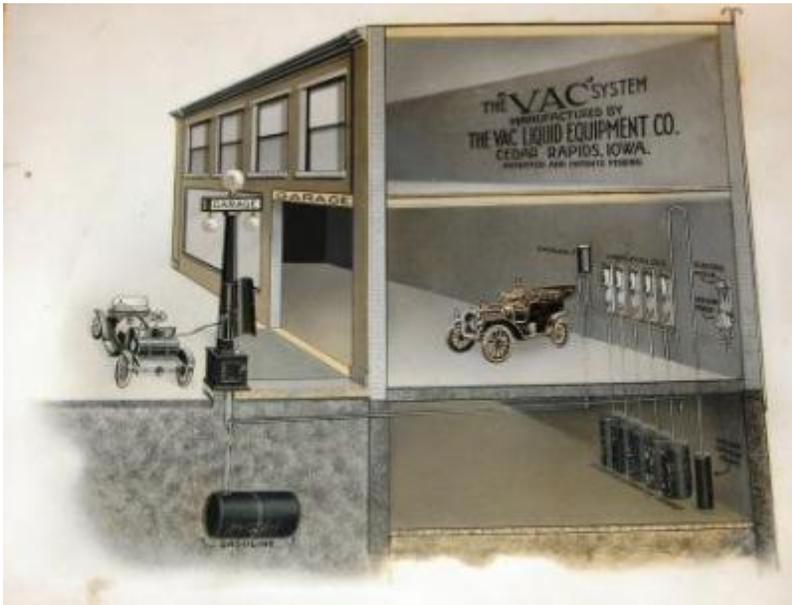
*John J. Tokheim is one of Iowa's foremost inventors, holding over 150 patents for the safe handling of flammable liquids.*



*John and Senva's only child, Agnes would later grow up to run the company her father built.*



*John Tokheim (left) in his factory in 1911 with several of his Triune pumps. Nephews Jorgen and Nils (right) came as young men to work in his factory.*



*Because he was worried that flammable liquid such as gasoline or kerosene (previously delivered to stores and stored above ground in wooden barrels might catch fire and burn down his store, John Tokheim designed a new way to safely store and pump flammable liquids from underground tanks.*

## The Miller Family

**Parents:** Dr. William J. and Cora

**Father's Occupation:** Doctor

**Children:** Katheryne

**Home:** White house with green trim and green porch

Your father may be a doctor, but that doesn't necessarily mean he likes to live the refined and civilized town life. On the contrary, he grew up on the rough and tumble Iowa frontier and loves the outdoors and hardworking pioneer life as much as anyone! But a love of learning and healing people is in his blood, and in the end, he really couldn't help but to become a doctor.

The Miller family is actually descended from German nobility who came to America around the time of the Revolutionary War. Your grandparents, \_\_\_ came from Pennsylvania in the 1830's to settle in the newly formed Iowa territory, and your father grew up as a boy living in a log cabin, fishing and hunting for wild game in order to help feed the family. Your grandfather believed very strongly in education, and made sure that all of his children, even his daughters, got a college education –something that was almost unheard of in that time. But getting a college education –let alone a medical degree- was a very difficult thing to do in Iowa during the 1860's. Where your father lived, there wasn't even a high school, let alone a college, and the country school houses where he lived didn't go past the eighth grade. In order to learn the things a high school would normally teach and be able to get into a college, your father had to teach himself!



*Dr. William J. Miller*



*With only an 8th grade education, both Dr. Miller and his brother Dave taught country school for a few years to earn money while they studied to pass their college entrance exams.*

Both he and his older brother Dave were able to do this by getting jobs teaching in country school houses as soon as they had passed the eighth grade. (In those days, you only had to have an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education to teach in a one room school). By teaching other students, your father got really good at the mathematics, English and grammar he had already learned, and when his students were studying and working on their lessons, he was able to read and study from even more advanced books to teach himself. Both he and Dave saved their money from school teaching and were able to pass their college entrance exams. They attended Purdue University in Indiana, and then came back to Iowa to

study medicine at Keokuk Medical College, the first Medical school west of the Mississippi River.

He and Dave eventually opened up their own medical practices in the towns of Wilton Junction and Sunbury. For several years they worked as railroad surgeons – doctors who contracted with the local railroads to take care of railroad workers who were injured on the job. At



*Dr. Miller and his brother Dave worked as railroad surgeons, treating railroad workers badly injured in train accidents like this one.*

that time, working on the railroad was the most dangerous job in America, with thousands of workers being severely injured or killed from train accidents. Railroad surgeons treated patients who had been severely burned or scalded by steam, or who had lost hands, feet or even arms or legs in train accidents. Uncle Dave became such a good surgeon from dealing with such injuries that he was eventually hired to be the head of trauma surgery at the University of Chicago Medical School. Your father, however, decided he wanted to explore the western frontier and after giving up the practice in Wilton Junction, he spent some time in the Texas and Oklahoma before staking a homestead claim in the South Dakota Territory.

His medical skills were always in demand, as he was the only doctor for 500 square miles. He spent very little time on his claim, often wandering much of the Dakota Territory practicing medicine with whatever supplies and equipment he could pack into the saddlebags of his trusty horse, Barney. He had many adventures in South Dakota and spent much time fishing on the Sioux Indian reservation, where he made friends with the Sioux warrior “Rain-in-the-face,” who was said to have killed General Custer at the famous battle of Little Big Horn. Eventually he returned to Iowa, where he resumed his practice and met and married your mother before settling down to run the farm she had inherited from her parents outside of Wilton Junction.



Although he still keeps a small house in town for his office and practice, you spend most of your time living on the farm, and ride to school on your black pony, Petty. In fact, you and your father ride horses just about everywhere when the weather is nice, but when it’s not, your father has invested in a better way to travel. He has just bought the very first motor car in town, a brand new red Overland roadster, just like this one!



### **The Rubek - Pohorsky Family**

**Parents:** Anton & Mary Rubek

**Children:** Mamie Rubek, Cousins Anna & Benjamin Pohorsky

**Family Business:** Meat Market and Grocery

When you come to visit Ushers Ferry, you might have a hard time recognizing your store, because it looks very different from the time period that you would have lived and worked in it.

Originally built by the Svec family, it was always a meat market and grocery store. Not long after it was built, Mr. Svec sold it to your father, and it became your home and business.

Like most stores and businesses of this time, you would have lived in an apartment above the store, and the operation of your family business was such a big part of your life that you probably spent more time in the store than you did in your private living space! Everyone in the family would have worked or helped out in the store front. When she wasn't taking care of the house and family, Mrs. Rubek would have been very active in the store, waiting on customers, stocking shelves, and helping Mr. Rubek keep up with the bills. Mamie and Cousin Anna Pohorsky would have had a lot of responsibility as well, waiting on customers, taking orders over the telephone, dusting and cleaning the shelves and cases. Cousin Benjamin would also have kept busy helping his uncle with the cuts of meat and making

deliveries to customers. The butcher and meat trade was very strong in your family. Your mother's father, Grandfather Vaclav Pohorsky, worked for many years at Sinclair Meat Packing across from Czech Village, and new the butcher trade well. In addition, your mother's sister Anna married another butcher, Frank Stransky and they eventually opened their own butcher shop in Riverside, Iowa.

Although the Rubeks really only operated their store as more of a butcher shop and meat market, the store now looks more like a General Store or mercantile common to that time. General stores in that time period had to carry "a little bit of everything," from dry goods and groceries to fresh food, kitchen tools and and gadgets, clothing, shoes, hats, hardware, household supplies and more. A town like Ushers Ferry would have desperately needed a store with a wide selection of items for sale, as it would likely have been the only store in town.

The family bedrooms and apartments would have been directly over the store, and access to the private family living quarters would have been through the doorway next to the ice room at the back of the building. The small additions on the right hand side in the picture above may have been kitchen or small parlor where callers could visit with Mrs. Rubek as she prepared family meals, and minded the store.

By the time Rubek's store came to Ushers Ferry, it had gone through a great many changes. The entire upper story of the building had been removed, as well as the small cottage and addition at the back of the building. However, if you look closely, you will notice, the front doors and big display windows are still pretty much the same.



*Interior of Kadlec's Grocery Store, Cedar Rapids, 1936.*

## Recess Games

### Pom-Pom Pullaway

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Directions:** This game is played outside. Two lines are drawn on the playing field with 30 to 50 feet between them. All players stand on one of the lines, except the one player who is chosen to be “IT” and who stands in the center of the field. “IT” calls any one player by name, adding the formula, as below:

***“John Smith, Pom Pom Pullaway”***

***“Come away or I’ll fetch you away!”***

The player named must then run across the playing field to the safety line on the opposite side, while “IT” tries to catch him/her. If the child reaches the line safely, he/she remains there until all other children have a turn. Anyone caught by “IT” stays in the middle and helps catch the other players, but the original “IT” remains the caller throughout the game. After all of the uncaught players have crossed to one side, they try in the same way to return to their first goal until all the players are caught. The first one that was caught is “IT” for the next game. EVERYONE on the safety line may run at the same time if “IT” calls out “POM POM PULLAWAY” without saying a specific child’s name.

### Please Mr. Crocodile

**Number of Players:** 5+

**Recommended Age:** 4 and up

**Equipment:** None

To play:

One player is chosen as Mr. Crocodile, and stands in the middle of the yard or room.

All the rest of the players stand side by side at one end of the yard or room.

The players chant:

***“Please Mr. Crocodile, may we cross the river? If not, why not, what’s your favorite color?”***

Mr. Crocodile calls out a color, and all the players wearing that color are safe to cross past Mr. Crocodile to the other side of the yard/room. Example: Mr. Crocodile calls out ‘blue’, so all those wearing blue cross the yard/room.

Once the safe players are across the river, the rest of the players must try to run to the other side without being tagged or caught by Mr. Crocodile.

If Mr. Crocodile doesn’t catch anyone, the game is replayed with the same Mr. Crocodile. If someone is caught, that player becomes the new crocodile.

### What’s The Time Mr. Wolf?

**Number of players:** 2+

**Recommended Age:** 3 and up

**Equipment:** None

To play:

One player is chosen as Mr. Wolf, and stands on one side of the yard/room, facing away, eyes covered. The rest stands side by side in a line on the other side of the yard/room, facing Mr. Wolf's back. All together they chant "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?"

Mr. Wolf selects a time between 1 and 12 o'clock, and calls it out.. The other players then take that many steps toward Mr. Wolf. Example: Mr. Wolf calls out 3 o'clock, so the players take 3 steps.

These two actions are repeated, resulting in the other players moving closer and closer to Mr. Wolf. When Mr. Wolf is ready, he changes his response to the question to "Dinnertime!"

At this cue, all of the players must turn around and race back to the starting line without getting caught by Mr. Wolf. The player who is caught becomes the next Mr. Wolf.

### **Fox and Geese**

**Equipment Needed: None**

Directions: One child is chosen to be the fox, another is behind the gander, each with his hands on the shoulders of the one next in front. The gander tries to protect his flock of geese from being caught by the fox, and to do this spreads out his arms and dodges around in any way he sees fit to keep the last goose from being tagged. (The fox may tag only the last goose in line.) The geese may cooperate with the gander by doubling and redoubling their line to prevent the fox from tagging the last goose. If the fox does tag the last goose, that goose becomes the fox and the fox becomes the gander.

### **Suggestions for Dressing up**

**Girls:** Long sleeved blouse and Knee-high socks. Brown or black shoes (preferably no sneakers). If hair is long, wear in braids.

**Boys:** Jeans or dark pants. Long sleeved, button-down shirt. Brown or black shoes or boots, (preferably no sneakers). Suspenders, if they have them. Bib overalls are OK too.

### **Touring the Village**

Ushers Ferry offers a variety of options for touring the village. The basic tour option for the One room school is a self-guided experience that can be led by teachers and adult chaperones with the "One Room School Journal" which you can download and print for students in advance as you tour the exhibits on your own.

#### **Self-Guided Town Tour**

The village offers audio tour boxes in many of the buildings, and staff can also provide adult chaperones with a binder of printed material that they may read aloud to students as you visit the various buildings. (This is essentially the family biography information included in this packet, and you will note that at the beginning of each biography there is a notation for which building in the village it corresponds with).

As part of the One Room School Journal, the "Township Hall" page includes an exercise in Township Government. A self-guided station is set up in the Town Hall including maps and laminated instruction sheets. If you wish to lead this exercise yourself, we recommend you read the Township Government and Mock Trial instructions included in this packet prior to your arrival at Ushers Ferry. This exercise

works best with a full class, so we would recommend doing this part of the village tour first before breaking up into smaller groups to tour the buildings with parents.

### **Partial Guided Village Tour**

For an additional fee (please see our fees on the village website), you can have a 45 minute guided tour of the Village. This will include the 30 minute Township government exercise and court case led by a village guide as well as a 15 minute tour of the business district buildings including the Saloon, General Store and Newspaper office. The remainder of the village homes and businesses can be toured on your own with teachers and chaperones.

### **Full Guided Village Tour**

For an additional fee (equivalent to the cost of a basic one room school admission), you may choose to receive a fully guided tour of the village with an Ushers Ferry tour guide. In addition to leading the Township government exercise, and touring the business district buildings, the guide will lead the tour through the Ushers Ferry homes and businesses outlined in the One Room school journal, provide a more detailed history of the buildings and help students answer question from the student journals.

### **One Room School Journal**

The One Room School Journal is a student activity packet with questions about each of the village buildings that students can answer by examining the exhibits, reading or listening to the self-guided tour information. The Township government exercise in the back of the packet is best worked as a large group or single class before breaking up to tour the village in smaller groups with chaperones.

An electronic copy of the One Room School Journal may be downloaded from the Ushers Ferry website at the following link: <http://www.cedar-rapids.org/resident-resources/parks-recreation/ushers-ferry/education/pages/teacherresources.aspx>

Please print it off and bring it with you on the day of your tour, along with a supply of pencils and clip boards if you have them!

### **Township Meeting and Court**

Ushers Ferry tells the story of rural Township government, a system used to quickly establish efficient and effective local government in sparsely populated rural areas before the advent of the modern centralized county government we have today. Based upon the Congressional Land Survey system which was used to settle the Iowa territory and much of the United States, counties were broken up into smaller townships, in which local residents were elected to serve the needs of the township. Constables, Road Supervisors, Assessors, Fence viewers, and Justices of the Peace administrated local law and provided basic services to rural citizens until the early twentieth century, when improved roads and communication allowed many of these duties to be absorbed by the central county government. The Town Hall activity includes a basic map exercise in the One Room School journal that allows students to explore the geographic boundaries of a township, as well as activity cards that allow students to draw for a township position, and even have a fence viewing and court case over a township fence dispute.

In order to receive the best experience from this activity, we recommend working through it as a large group or single class with the assistance of teachers and adult chaperones. Once the activity has been completed, it will be more efficient to break out into smaller groups to tour the village independently.

### Map Exercise

The Town Hall pages of the Student activity packet include a 1907 map of Clinton Township, where Ushers Ferry is now located and the Usher family once lived. This map contains section numbers, markings for school houses and churches, and names of prominent land owners such as Dyer Usher. By carefully studying the map, students should be able to answer the questions on the first page.

Mounted on the wall in the Town Hall is an original 1869 Map of Linn County. Labels have been added to the map to explain geographical units such as Townships, Ranges, and Sections. This map is useful for explaining the difference between Congressional Survey Townships used to define property ownership, and the later civil or political townships that were grafted over them to create districts of local government. Questions on the second page of the Town Hall student activity must be answered by studying this map. In order to answer question two on this page, students must find both the Range numbers printed on the bottom of the map and Township numbers on the right and left sides of the map and use them to plot the location of the land they are looking for. (They usually require adult assistance for this activity).

### Township Meeting

On the table in the front of the room is a wooden box with laminated cards. Students may draw from the box for a Township office. Using the list and explanation of Township offices provided in your One Room Journal Answer sheet, you can have them stand up by office and explain their various roles. (This will save a bit of time). Once everyone understands their role, you can determine which members of the Township Government should be involved in the Fence viewing and court case.

(You might want to make sure that if any Ushers or Thompsons are serving in one of the pertinent roles, that they recuse themselves for conflict of interest and appoint an objective 3<sup>rd</sup> party to stand in for them!)

### Township Court: The Case of the Naughty Goat (Iowa Fence laws and Township Rule)

Although many of the duties of Township officers have now been assumed by the centralized county government, Township trustees are still an active part of local government in Iowa today. Today, their responsibilities have been reduced to three main roles: supervision of Township volunteer fire departments and emergency services, care and maintenance of township cemeteries, and rendering decisions in fence line disputes between neighbors.

The laminated sheets on the table will provide you with instructions for the case. The Fence Viewer, Trustees



and Justice will officiate the case. For added participation, “Constables,” may escort the opposing parties (Usher and Thompson Family members) to the scene of the fence viewing. If members of either the Usher Family or Thompson family happen to have drawn a position of Township Trustee, Justice or Fence Viewer, they must excuse themselves from the case and either the Justice or Trustees must select an unbiased citizen of the Township to serve in their position on this matter.

After reading through the details of the case, you may take your class to the “scene of the crime,” for the actual fence viewing decision. In this case, we use the wire fence that divides the Usher House from the Parsonage and School Teacher’s Cottage. In accordance with Iowa Right Hand fence rules, The Ushers should stand on their side of the fence in the exact middle of the fence line. The Thompsons should stand on their side of the fence facing them. Each party should then stick their right arm straight out. The Usher family is responsible for the fence from the center of the fence line to their right. -The Thompsons for the fencing from the center to their right. The Fence viewer then walks the entire length of fence and identifies any places where he or she thinks the goat most likely got out. The fence viewer then reports back to the trustees. Trustees confer and decide. If they think the faulty fence was the Usher’s section, the Ushers must pay. If the Thompsons, the Thompsons must pay. If the fault is on the part of both parties, then they must decide what is fair. –Perhaps the Thompsons receive half the damages and both parties fix their fence.

-There really is no right answer, but it is a good exercise for the kids to discuss and debate.

### **Access to the General Store Exhibit**

The General Store is a historical exhibit building that also doubles as a gift shop with items for purchase readily on display. As a result, this building is generally not open to tour unless a staff member is present. If you have not made arrangements for your class to purchase from the Store and Saloon on your lunch break, but wish your students to actually go inside the building, ask a staff member if it would be possible to open the building for a few minutes during your lunch break.

### **Make a School House Visit Come Alive (Activities for your classroom)**

- Write a list of questions you might ask of someone that lived back then, and send it to Ushers Ferry to see if they write you back!
- Do a written comparison of a 1900’s school to your school today.
- Make up a riddle about one object seen in the school house.
- Write a song or play about the school or your experience and perform it for fellow students.
- Draw a picture of something you saw.
- Make a class book or a family album for your role playing family.
- Using a city Map, show the route your bus traveled to Ushers Ferry. Then compare it to the 1907 map (provided in the Teacher’s packet). Did those same roads exist 100 years ago? What route would you have had to take if you had tried to travel from the location of your school to Ushers Ferry 100 years ago?

- Write your own ending to the story “Why the Sea is Salt.”
- Have your own spelling bee

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## **Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this packet or the One Room School Program, please do not hesitate to contact us!

For Bookings or other information call Cathy Cropp Scanlon at 319-286-5763 or email [c.scanlon@cedar-rapids.org](mailto:c.scanlon@cedar-rapids.org)

Township Map of Linn County: 1907

