

# One Room School House Journal

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## Teacher / Chaperone Answer Key

### Village Map:

To help students find their way around the village, we have provided a map inside the front cover. The numbers on the map will correspond with the headings on the pages where they can find the answers to their questions.

### The Usher House

1. What important natural resources made the Ushers want to settle here? How did they use those resources to make a living?  
*A. (In the Usher House Video) -Timber and Water (streams)and the Cedar River. The Usher family settled close to the river because of the plentiful timber that grew here and the close access to the Cedar River. Before there were good roads, the Cedar River served as a major transportation route, connecting Cedar Rapids and those who lived along it to other major communities such as Waterloo and, eventually the great Mississippi River. Timber was important, as the Usher Family owned a sawmill and cut and sold their timber as lumber for people to build their homes and businesses. The Cedar River also provided the Usher family a steady income, as they shuttled people back and forth across the river for a fee.*
2. What is a ferry boat?  
*A. See the lithograph print of the ferry boat in the front parlor of the Usher House. Ferries were used to take people and goods back and forth across the river before bridges and roads were built.*
3. Mr. Usher got a road built to his ferry by serving in one important office for Clinton Township. What was that position?  
*A. (In the Usher Ferry Road Video). Dyer, Henry and Seymour Usher each took a turn serving as Road Supervisor of Clinton Township. In Township government, Road Supervisors were responsible for the grading and maintenance of all the rural roads in the township, but also had the power to petition the county for the construction of new roads through the township. By working together and each serving terms as Roads Supervisors, the Dyer Usher and his cousins were able to construct a road from Spring Grove across the Cedar River at the ferry landing and all the way to what is now Blairs Ferry Road.*
4. Does this house seem big or small to you? How many people do you think could live here comfortably?

*A. Answers may vary, depending on student perspective. In reality, this house once housed six people at one time when Henry A. Usher's son, Joseph Perry Usher lived here with his wife and children. Joseph and his wife Emily had the bedroom downstairs off the parlour, while daughters Alta, Mamie, and Pearl shared the upstairs loft and the small butter room off the kitchen was made into a bedroom for son Henry Perry Usher.*

5. What very important room is missing from this house that we all have in our houses today?

*A. The bathroom! –Students may look out into the backyard to find the outhouse, which was used year round, but you may also point out the very large chamber pot under the corner of the bed which was used in the event that someone was sick or it was bitterly cold outside. The wash stand beside the bed served as a sort of bathroom sink, with fresh warm water being poured from the pitcher into the basin for basic sponge baths, shaving and washing of hair. Once a week, usually on Saturday night, the big tin bathtub would be brought in and placed in the kitchen behind the stove for the family to take turns at the weekly bath.*

6. Where did they wash their dishes?

*A. The dry sink is the big "box on legs" underneath the kitchen window by the stove. Dishwater could be heated on the stove, but would be poured into wash basins in the dry sink so that water wouldn't splash on the floor and table while dishes were being washed. A drain hole is bored in the corner, and a slop bucket would be placed underneath to catch any water that might spill and drain out.*

## **The Hired Hand's House**

1. Do you think the hired man who lived in this house was married or single?

*A. In this house, likely single. Many farmers employed hired hands as working a farm in the time before tractors required lots of people to help. If children weren't big enough to help with farm work, then the farmer often had to employ a few hired men to help him plant and harvest the crops. Since the distance between farms was often quite far in horse and buggy days, it was easier to offer the hired man a place to live on the farm as part of his wages –but you didn't want a stranger living in your house with you, so you built a smaller house out back where he could sleep and take his meals.*

2. How many people do you think could live comfortably in this house?

*Probably one, although Mary Ditch, (granddaughter of the Snobles), recalled starting out her married life in a house this tiny when she and her husband were first married and he was still working as a hired man. The house was so tiny, there was nowhere for guests to sit except on the bed!*

3. Would you like to live in a house this small? What would be good about it? What would be bad?  
*A. Today, this cottage, which is only 198 square feet would be considered a "Tiny House." Tiny houses and the concept of "micro-living" is not a new idea by any means. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many two and four room houses were built in among larger homes and used as quarters for servants or hired men, and later as "grandparent homes" for aging parents who still needed privacy, but could not handle living in a great big house on their own. They were a practical solution for older or single people, as they were very efficient to heat and light, they cost very little to repair and take care of, and best of all they were quick to clean! However, they didn't have much room for a lot of possessions, and you probably couldn't have a lot of people over for dinner...*

## The Church & Parsonage

1. What Four Freedoms did Free Methodist's believe in?  
*Freedom of **the spirit***  
*Freedom **from slavery***  
*Freedom **from secret societies***  
*Freedom **for all to worship***
2. Why was a church important to a community? What kinds of important services did Reverend Thompson provide?  
*Served on school boards and examining committees*  
*Made appearances at county fairs and spoke at community events, temperance and abolition speeches and attended all public meetings.*  
*Provided aid to the sick and the poor.*  
*Offered tutoring to young men bound for college*  
*Weddings*  
*Funerals*
3. How did Mrs. Thompson help in the community?  
*Provided aid to the sick and the poor*  
*Served as substitute teacher in the local schools*  
*Organized and served with ladies aid and charitable groups*

## The Doctor's House

1. In a time when very few women had more than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and women did not work outside the home, Dr. Miller's parents made sure all of their children received a college education –even the girls! Do you think they would have been surprised if their daughters had wanted to become doctors? Why or why not?  
*Education was very important to Dr. Miller's family, largely because the Miller's hailed from German nobility. In Germany, education was a priority for all upper class families, and the*

*Millers were not exception. It's hard to say whether or not Dr. Miller's parents would have supported his sisters becoming doctors, as that was very uncommon in that time, but for the Miller family, it would not have been the first time. Don't forget, that their great-grandmother, Regina VonSiebold was one of the first women doctors in Germany and delivered both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert as babies!*

2. Considering Dr. Miller only went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the country school, it would have been hard for him to go on to college and medical school. How do you think teaching country school might have helped him prepare for college?

*In the 1850's when Doctor Miller was a boy, there were very few high schools. Living out on the family farm, the only school in his neighborhood would have been a country school that ended at 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to go to high school in town, he would have had to pay tuition, and perhaps even pass entrance exams! Many young men who only had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and wanted professional careers as doctors or lawyers turned to teaching as a way to earn money for high school and college tuition, while taking the opportunity teaching offered as an additional opportunity to study and prepare for college or higher level entrance exams.*

3. Why is it important to have a Doctor in the community?

*Hospitals were only located in the "big" cities, like Cedar Rapids, Des Moines or Dubuque. If you were seriously injured or suddenly fell sick, the hospital was often too far away to be of much help and there was no ambulance service like there is today. As a result, a small town doctor was very much a first responder, and he often made house calls, coming straight to the patient, rather than having a seriously ill or injured patient transported to him.*

4. Write their own ending to the pony story (optional).

## **The Doctor's Garden**

1. Which one of the herbs on the table would Doctor Miller have given you if you had the flu? Why might you not want to take too much of it?

*Boneset – but be careful! It's also a laxative, so if you take too much of it, it will give you diarrhea!*

2. What was Uva-Ursi used for?

*Uva-ursi, also known as common bearberry, is a small leafy shrub common to Europe and North America, and has been used for centuries to treat all sorts of urinary tract and kidney ailments, including gallstones, and urinary tract infections.*

3. Which one of Dr. Miller's herbs is the stinkiest?

*Valerian! It's very pungent! –But it was also said to be very effective for calming anxiety and*

*nervous disorders, having a mild sedative effect.*

Chaperone Activity: Fresh herbs in the garden.

*In the small garden out the back door next to the summer kitchen there are several fresh herbs planted, including lavender, spearmint, peppermint, chives and more. Herbs can often be identified by their scent. Have students pick a fresh leaf and rub it between their fingers to see if they can identify the herbs by the way they smell.*

## Telephone House:

Activity: Play a game of "Operator." –Instructions in the student journal.

1. Would you have liked the job of Operator? Why or Why not? What if you were able to listen to everyone's phone conversations? –Would that change your answer?

## The Czech House

1. Would you like to have your grandparents living in your back yard or right next door to you? What would be good about it? What might be hard about having them so close?

*There really was no such thing as retirement pensions or nursing homes until the mid-twentieth century. As a result, many families had to take in grandma or grandpa when it got too hard for them to live on their own. In some cases, grandparents might pass the large family home down to their adult children, and then build a tiny retirement home next door or in the back yard –or, on the farm, perhaps even move into a smaller hired hand's house. This way grandparents could help babysit and look after grandchildren, and grandchildren when they got bigger, could help take care of grandma and grandpa!*

2. If your grandparents could not afford to build a tiny house like this one, would you enjoy having them live in your house with you?

*Families who couldn't afford to build a tiny grandparents house, often had grandma and grandpa living right in the big house with them. –Which could get crowded as families grew and kids got bigger. –And do your parents and grandparents always agree about everything? Do you think it would be hard for them to all be living in the same house together?*

3. If older people did not have families to help take care of them, and they could not take care of themselves, what do you think happened to them? Where did they go to live?

*With no retirement pensions and nursing homes, older people who did not have grown children to help them out might have a very hard time indeed. Sometimes they could move in with their aging or widowed brothers and sisters, cousins or friends, and banded together to help each other out. But if not, and they fell on truly hard times, the option of last resort was the county poor farm...*

## The Snoble House

1. Why did the Snoble family decide to leave Bohemia and come to America? Can you think of a country today where life is so hard that people are willing to emigrate to another country where they don't even speak the same language?

*Syria, South America, Immigrants from Africa, Sudan, Uganda, etc...*

2. Like many Czech immigrants, the Snoble family brought many traditional Czech and German foods, customs and entertainments with them. Some of them became so common that we now consider them as part of our American culture as well. Can you identify the traditional Czech or German foods that we still eat in Iowa today?

*APPLE PIE KOLACHES SODA BREAD SAURKRAUT HAMBURGERS  
POPPYSEED CAKE CROISSANTS HOT DOGS BRATWURST CHILI*

## The Business District

1. What are the different businesses represented in Ushers Ferry?

*General Store, Newspaper, Telephone Cooperative, Saloon, Hotel, Blacksmith Shop, Railroad Depot*

2. What kinds of important businesses and buildings does your town have that are missing from Ushers Ferry?

*Hospital, Fire Department, Police Station, Nursing Home or Care Center...*

3. What businesses does Ushers Ferry have that your town does not have?

*Blacksmith Shop, Railroad Depot? Any others?*

4. What businesses do you think are the most important to have in your town so that people will want to live there?

*School and Church were usually the first community buildings built, as they served as central gathering places for the local neighborhood, and provided essential social services like education and/or care of the poor.*

*Stores, Blacksmith Shop, Train Depot (Today this would be the equivalent of an airport), Hotel*

## The General Store

*The General Store was usually the first, and sometimes the only store in town, so it had to carry a little bit of everything –kind of like the Walmart of 1900! In the days before credit cards like Visa and Mastercard, customers were often to make some other kind of payment arrangements for the storekeeper. The large cash file on the counter to the left was filled with account books, for customers who had set up specific charge accounts with the store keeper. Other customers were occasionally able to barter and trade with the store keeper, trading fresh produce like garden fruits and vegetables, or eggs, milk, butter and cream from their farms for ready made goods they might wish to buy, such as shoes, bolts of fabric and such. On the front door of the General Store, the store keeper as posted a list of commodities, or items he is looking to buy to restock his store. There is also a grocery list*

of items the average family would have bought in 1900, along with how much that would have cost. Using the Shopping and commodity lists, answer the questions in the student journal.

1. Commodity prices are the “wholesale” prices, or what it costs the storekeeper to buy the goods he resells in his store. Sometimes he is willing to buy from you or trade with you in order to get the goods he needs to serve his other customers. What items on this list might you be even be able to raise in town if you had a back yard?

*Apples, potatoes Chickens, Eggs. People frequently raised chickens and small farm animals such as goats in town (even in Cedar Rapids) well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until urban nuisance laws were passed banning them. Today, however, backyard chickens are making a comeback!*

What would be raised out in the country on an Iowa farm?

*Pork, Beef, Butter and Milk all come from large animals which would require a lot of pasture and grain and would have to be raised out on the farm.*

2. What cannot be grown in Iowa that the storekeeper will likely have to import from somewhere else? *Coffee, Rice, Sugar (White Sugar, that is. Brown sugar can be made from Maple syrup, which can be made in Iowa).*

3. Compare the Commodity list to the Shopping price list. If you sell a dozen eggs to the storekeeper, how much money will you make?

*The storekeeper will pay you 18¢*

4. If the storekeeper in turn sells that dozen eggs to someone else, how much money will he make?

*If the storekeeper pays 18 cents for the eggs, then he will make 18 cents when he resells them, following the old salesman rule of thumb for price setting: “Cost x 2”*

## The Saloon

1. How much was the fine a Saloon owner had to pay if he wanted to sell alcohol under the Mulct Law?

*\$600 per year*

2. Thinking through all the families represented here at Ushers Ferry, which families do you think would have favored the temperance laws (supported the alcohol ban)? –Who do you think would have wanted to be able to buy alcohol at the Saloon? Why?

*Reverend Thompson would certainly have been a strong supporter of temperance and the ban on alcohol. Free Methodists, along with their belief in freedom of the spirit, freedom from slavery and secret societies, also believed in freedom from vices such as alcohol, which caused much misery in 1800’s American life. In his personal testimony and history, Reverend*

*Thompson wrote of his own struggle with alcohol, of the hardships it had caused in his family, and of his desperate turn to God and prayer as a method of overcoming it.*

*The Snobles, in contrast, came from the Czech and Eastern European culture, where beer was considered a staple of the working class diet. Often considered as "Liquid Bread," beer had many carbohydrates in it, and was a filling drink that helped working class people feel less hungry when paired with their often small meal portions. Fermenting and brewing were also time honored methods of food preservation, and as grains brewed into beer would not spoil and would last much longer than grain simply ground into flour and baked. Over time, beer and wines had become an important part of their food culture, and many Czechs, Germans, and Irish were angry at laws which forbid them to have drinks they'd consumed for generations.*

3. Why do you think people wanted to make the sale of alcohol illegal in Iowa?

*By the 1850's America was producing more whiskey than ever before, but was largely unprepared for the social consequences. Almost nothing was known about the disease of alcoholism in that time, but many people in society quickly started to feel its effects. Temperance Societies formed, promoting the ban of alcohol and liquor as a way to combat its impact on many working class families, and many cartoons depicted the evils of alcohol with images of a factory worker taking his weekly pay check and spending it all at the bar while his family went hungry at home...*

4. What is the big brass container on the floor at the end of the bar called? What was it used for?  
*A spittoon was used for men who chewed tobacco to spit into. Chewing tobacco tends to make them salivate more, and it also made their spit pretty brown and yucky, so emptying the spittoon would not have been a pleasant job!*

## Blacksmith Shop:



File: used for smoothing or sharpening metal edges.

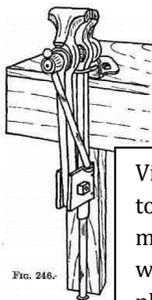


FIG. 246.

Vise: Used to hold metal work in place.



Hammer, used to bend and and shape hot metal.



Anvil: heated metal is hammered on the surface of the anvil to flatten or round the piece.

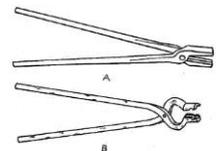


FIG. 245.—Types of tongs.

Tongs: used to hold hot metal, or take heated metal out of the forge.

## Town Hall: Have a Township Meeting (Overview to give the Students)

A Township is a small geographic area. Historically, there are two kinds of townships. *Survey Townships* are simply geographic references used by the Government Survey Office to define areas and location of land for property deeds and ownership. A standard township was six miles square and divided into 36 sections of land. Each section was one square mile. This system of measuring and mapping the land left

an indelible mark on Iowa that can be seen from outer space. All of the land in Iowa and a great deal of the Midwestern and Great Plains states that were obtained through the Louisiana purchase were measured from a starting point called the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Meridian (actually located somewhere in a swamp in Arkansas!) From this point, Land Surveyors essentially divided this vast swath of the United States into a grid of Survey Townships spreading North and West, making easily definable plots of land for pioneers to settle on.

*Civil Townships* are units of local government. As the Iowa was settled and became a state, it was easy to establish these small local governments based upon the boundaries set by the government survey. That is why so many of Iowa's counties are rectangular in shape! However, you will note that some Civil Townships are not rectangular, these boundaries were usually changed later by the people who settled in those areas as certain natural land features or transportation routes often made it difficult for them to connect with other settlers within their survey township, so they changed the geographic area to suit their political needs.

### **Guide/Chaperone/Teacher Instructions**

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. On the back of each card is a written explanation of what their role in Township government was. Depending on the amount of time you want to spend on this, you can either have them stand up (By office), and explain their role, or you can have them break into groups (committees) to discuss various township problems.

For a short group exercise/discussion on the day of the tour, you can pick either one or both of two Township discussions. For cold and rainy days, you may want to consider doing "The School Teacher Problem," which gives some perspective on gender inequality and ways in which wider community needs might win out over educational needs.

On nice days, you can have a court case and Fence Viewing with "The Case of the Naughty goat." In which certain Township officers must settle a dispute between two neighbors over a fence line. Once every Township office has been filled, you can determine which members of the Township Government should be involved in deciding the Township Court Case.

### **Township Offices**

**Trustees** are the legal guardians of the public interests of the township who make laws, divide the township into road districts, open roads on petition, select jurors, build and repair bridges and town halls, purchase and care for cemeteries, act as judges of elections, and have charge of the poor not in the county charge.

**The Clerk** attends the meetings of the trustees and makes a careful record of the meetings. Keeps the poll (voting) lists and township records. Administers oaths and notifies new officers of their election.

**Treasurer:** Taxes collected from township citizens are paid to the Treasurer.

He receives all fines, forfeitures and license fees paid to the township. Keeper of Township funds, and pays out money upon the written order of the Trustees and witnessed by the Clerk.

**The Assessor** makes a list of all of the names of all persons subject to taxation, estimates the value of their real and personal property, assesses a tax and delivers the list to the Auditor or Tax Collector. In some states there is also a poll-tax of \$1-3 laid upon all male inhabitants more than 21 years of age.

**School Directors:** Have charge of the public schools of the township. Number of directors varies from 3-5. Directors levy taxes for school purposes, visit and inspect the school buildings, adopt text books, regulate the order of studies and length of term, fix salaries, and purchase furniture and equipment.

**Constables:** are the police officers of the Township. There are usually 2-3 in each Township. They wait upon the Justice's Court, and are subject to his orders. Constables keep the peace, serve warrants, and in some states act as tax collectors.

**Justice:** Elected by the citizens of the Township, the Justice is the judge who presides over small offenses and civil suits for small amounts. They are responsible for settling small legal disputes between citizens of the Township. Justices may be called to act as coroners, determining whether or not a person died of natural causes, accident, or if their death should be investigated as a crime.

**Collector:** Elected or appointed by the Township Trustees, the Collector is responsible for collecting the taxes of the Township and reviewing the books of the Treasurer and Auditor to make sure they are correct and in order. Collector's occasionally take on other duties, viewing fence lines in dispute, or seeing that stray livestock or animals are collected and cared for until their rightful owner is found and has paid for their keep.

**Road Commissioners:** or surveyors of highways, have charge of the construction and repair of highways, summon those subject to labor on the road and direct their work. In some Townships, Commissioners have the right to require two days of labor from each farmer in the township to help grade and maintain the roads.

**Supervisor:** The Township representative of the County Board of Supervisors

### 1. The School Teacher Problem...

Two people have applied for a job as teacher of the Cherry Valley School House. Both have recently graduated from the 8th grade and obtained their teaching certificates. The first person is a girl, who was an excellent student, is very good with children, and who everyone agrees would be an excellent teacher. The second applicant is a young man who might not be as good

of a teacher, but who is planning on attending college to become a lawyer. Some people on the committee want to hire the young woman, because she will be a better teacher, even though they know she may get married in a couple of years and they will have to hire a new teacher all over again. Other people on the committee want to hire the young man, because even though they know he also will be leaving in a year or so. They want to hire him because Ushers Ferry does not have a lawyer, and they are hoping that after he finishes college, he will come back to Ushers Ferry and open a law practice. You have the deciding vote.

Which one would you hire? Why?

*Although today we would probably hire the young woman, who seems to be the better teacher, chances are very good that the Township school board would actually have hired the young man instead. In that time, women rarely held jobs outside of the home (unless they were helping their husband in his own business, such as a store). Teaching was one of the few acceptable jobs a woman could have, but well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was forbidden for a woman to get married and still teach school. That meant that as soon as a woman married, she had to give up her teaching job. (As Laura Ingalls Wilder did).*

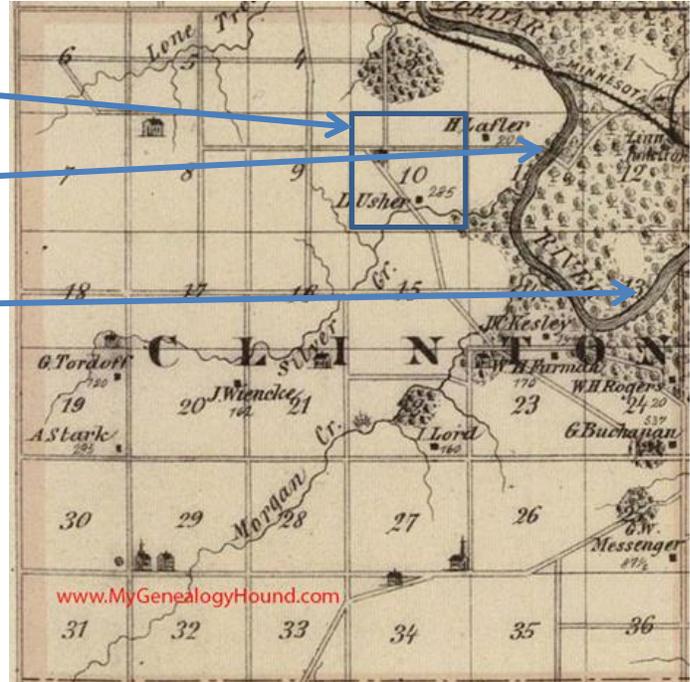
*When it came to choosing between a young woman or a young man for a teaching position, many Township School Directors might choose the young man, particularly if it was known that he was intending to pursue further studies and go away to college to become a skilled professional, such as a Doctor or a Lawyer. –Remember Doctor Miller? This is exactly how he was able to put himself through High School and pass the entrance exams for college. Often times, Township school boards hired men teachers over women, as a way to support their pursuit of a professional career. Doctors and Lawyers were essential services to a newly developing town, and if that young man went off to college and came back to set up either a medical or legal practice, it was good business for everyone in the Township.*

## **What is a Township?: Mapping 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).

1. What Section of Land does Dyer Usher live on?
2. Ushers Ferry Boat Location
3. Ushers Ferry Village Location
4. Sections of the Townships that have Churches:  
29, 27
5. School Houses in Clinton Township:  
*There are 8 school houses, located on sections: 1, 8, 10, 18, 23, 21, 29, 27*



### 1869 Linn County Map Exercise:

1. Townships that are not rectangular:  
*Bertram, Putnam, Monroe, Fayette, Washington, Rapids*
2. Civil Twp. 82, Range 5 West is named: Franklin and contains the towns of Mount Vernon and Lisbon.

### Township Meeting Minutes:

1. Were you appointed to a Township Office? What was it?
2. Did you serve on a Township Committee to solve a problem for the Township? If so, what was it? What did you decide?
3. **The Case of the Naughty Goat:** On the table with the wooden chest of Township Office cards, you will find a laminated sheet with instructions for the Naughty Goat Court case. Pick out the people involved in making the decision and go up to the Usher House fence line where the fence must be viewed to determine the outcome of the case.

