



Farming/Living History

I. SYNOPSIS

Pete Watson, director of the Howell Living History Farm, explains that on the farm they do things the way they were done one hundred years ago. Before there were gasoline engines, horses provided the power for much of the farm equipment. Watson explains that visitors are encouraged to help with the work.

We visit Howell Farm when they are shearing the sheep. One of the staff demonstrates how shearing has changed. In colonial days farmers used hand shears; in the late nineteenth century they used hand-cranked mechanical shears; today they use electric shears. Visitors help wash and card the wool. The narrator explains that in colonial days people carded the wool, spun it into thread, and wove it into cloth at home, but in the late nineteenth century they took it to mills in Trenton for carding, spinning, and weaving.

Farms a hundred years ago had many different crops and animals, unlike modern specialized farms that raise only one or two products, such as apples, peaches, dairy cows, or grain crops. Horses were especially important, because they provided transportation to markets, power for farm equipment, and manure for fertilizer.

II. KEY WORDS

Generation - the average number of years between the births of parents and their children

Grist mill - a building containing water-powered machinery that grinds grain into flour

Carding - combing wool to remove the tangles

Fertilizer - a substance that adds plant food to the soil

Living history - the attempt to do things as they were done in earlier times

III. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

A. FARMING IN 1900

1. Objective

Students will analyze how farming 100 years ago differed from farming today.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Download, reproduce Howell Farm Questions. Begin the class by explaining that they are about to view a video that will show them how farming 100 years ago differed from farming today. You might explain that 100 years ago means about four generations. You might demonstrate four generations by having four students come to the front of the class. Each should hold up a sign, one stating "your parents," the next "your grandparents," the next "your great grandparents," and the last "your great, great grandparents." Then distribute the question sheets and go over the questions with the class.

3. After Viewing the Program

Ask the students to fill out the Howell Farm Question sheet. Then go over the answers in class.

B. HISTORIC ADVERTISEMENTS

1. Objective

Students will interpret a visual document.

2. After Viewing the Program

Reproduce and distribute the advertisements from the 1897 Lambertville Directory and the Lambertville Directory Worksheet. Explain that a directory in 1900 was like a phone book today. Then define some of the archaic terms in the advertisements (dry good, notions, smearcase, etc.), which are defined at the bottom of the worksheet. Divide the class into small groups to fill out the worksheet indicating at which business was the farmer the supplier, at which was he the customer, and at

which was he both the supplier and the customer? Reassemble the class and compare the results.

V. SUGGESTED READINGS

Clemens, Paul G. E. *The Uses of Abundance: A History of New Jersey's Economy*. New Jersey History Series. Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1992.

Stanfield, Charles A., Jr. *An Ecological History of New Jersey*. New Jersey History Series. Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1996.

HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM (website)

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