

## GROWING UP IN THE 1880s

Note to teachers: This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the “Michigan Time Traveler” page published in the *Lansing State Journal* on September 8, 2004. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

**MASTERY** (*SOC 1.2 Comprehending the Past; SOC 1.3 Analyzing and Interpreting the Past*)

**Chores:** What kinds of chores did girls typically do? (Sewing, cleaning, washing clothes, churning butter, cooking, canning) What kinds of chores did boys typically do? (Planting, harvesting, chopping wood) What chores did both boys and girls do? (Milking cows, gathering eggs, picking fruit, weeding the garden) What chores did Adeline Graham write about? (Cared for the horses, washed dishes, made her bed, fed and watered the ducks) What chores or jobs did Delevan Brotherton do? (Worked in the gardens, took the school census, surveyed) What chores do you do?

**School:** Why did some children not attend school regularly? (Working on the farm – planting & harvesting; went to work in mills, mines and factories; school too far away to get to in bad weather) When were children required to attend school regularly? (After 1883) How did children get to school? (Walked or rode horses) How do children get to school today? What were some of the subjects students studied in the 1880s? (Reading, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, penmanship and geography) Are these different than subjects you study at school today?

**Play:** What were some of the favorite activities for children in the 1880s? (Outdoors activities, horseback riding, skating, bicycling, reading, croquet, marbles, picnics, holiday celebrations, fairs) What were some of Adeline’s favorite activities? (Horseback riding, reading, picking strawberries, caring for the horses) What are some of your favorite activities? (Make a list of the students’ favorite activities on the board. Have students discuss and determine whether each would be something that a child of the 1880s could do.)

**Events:** How was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrated in the 1880s? (Fireworks, speeches, reading the Declaration of Independence, bands, races, sports and games) What kinds of 4<sup>th</sup> of July “horseplay” did Della talk about? (climbing greased poles, chasing greased pigs, sack races, potato races). How do communities and families celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July today? Why was Della so excited about the ice cream that would be served at the Sunday School picnic? (They didn’t have the refrigeration methods we have today. During the winter months, ice would be cut on area lakes and rivers, hauled to an icehouse and stored for use during warm weather. Not every farm had an icehouse.)

**ACTIVITY ONE: PONDERING THE FUTURE** (SOC 1.3 *Analyze & Interpret the Past*; ELA 5 *Literature*; ELA 6 *Voice*)

Like many youth today, children in the 1880s spent time thinking about what they would be when they grew up. The excerpt below is from the diary of Adeline Graham. She was attending the Michigan Female Seminary at this time. Ask students to read each of these two excerpts. Tell students that (Adeline graduated from the Seminary in 1884 and attended Olivet College for a short time in 1885. She never did attend medical school. In 1893 she married Lee Wilkinson. They had three daughters. Ask students why they think Adeline did not reach her goals. (Was it harder for a woman to go to school then? Did Adeline think she could both marry and be a physician? Today do we think a woman can marry and be a physician? Have students write one paragraph on what they would like to do and why when they become adults. Then have them write a second paragraph about what challenges they will face if they want to reach this goal.

**February 10, 1884**

“It is silent hour now and I have been staring out of the window at the grey sky indulging in sweet melancholy dreams. I guess I am on the road to home-sickness. Shall I be a physician and lead a noble life relieving suffering and doing good? Or shall I do as so many women do, drift on in the old way, marry if the chance is presented and if not living a lonely life for others. No, I will not be so commonplace and yet I fear I haven’t the stern perseverance and concentration of all objects to become a truly noble physician. Oh, I don’t know what to do. If I was only sure I was fitted for a M.D. I would not hesitate a moment but to make a mistake my whole life would be unbearable.”

**February 19, 1884**

“I am so glad to tell you that at last my destiny is decided. I came to a firm decision Monday, Feb. 18, 1884 at about 2-30 P.M. I am going to be a Physician. It will be a noble life-work to devote myself to saving lives. It is for two years now that I have been wavering between two opinions and it is a relief to have it settled. One cannot live long at best and surely a short life full of usefulness is to be chosen rather than a long life of worldly pleasure and of no good to any but perhaps a very few.

“May I never falter or turn back from this on.”

**ACTIVITY TWO: CHORES THEN & NOW** (SOC 1.2 *Comprehending the Past*; SOC 1.3 *Analyze and Interpret the Past*)

By 1880, there is a lot of mass production. Print out, copy and pass out the attached chart to students. Read the list of chores with students. Have a discussion with them about similar and different chores then and now. Then, ask them to complete the chart. If they think a chore was a household chore from the 1880s, have them mark a check in the box under “1880s.” If they think it is a modern chore, have them mark the box under “Today.” If they think it is a chore from both long ago and today, have them check the box under “Both.” In the column marked “Tools,” ask them to list what tool or machine would have been used in the 1880s and/or today.

**ACTIVITY THREE: TELL ME YOUR STORY** (SOC 1.3 *Analyzing and Interpreting the Past*; ELA 1 *Meaning and Communication in Context*; ELA 6 *Voice*; Arts 2 *Creating Visual Arts*)

Much about the everyday lives of average people is handed down from adults to children by word of mouth through family stories. Ask students to conduct an oral history interview with a member of their family or a neighbor using the attached questionnaire. Have them bring the completed questionnaires to class and use the information they learned to create a story about the life of this person. Have students create a special booklet or cover for their story, so they can present it to this person.

### CHILDREN'S CHORES THEN AND NOW

<b>CHORE</b>	<b>1880S</b>	<b>TODAY</b>	<b>BOTH</b>	<b>TOOL/MACHINE</b>
<b>Cook</b>				
<b>Sew</b>				
<b>Load/Unload Dishwasher</b>				
<b>Carry Water</b>				
<b>Take out the Garbage</b>				
<b>Mend Clothes</b>				
<b>Pump Water</b>				
<b>Churn Butter</b>				
<b>Vacuum</b>				
<b>Clean Bedroom</b>				
<b>Wash the Car</b>				
<b>Mow the Lawn</b>				
<b>Milk the Cows</b>				
<b>Feed the Animals</b>				
<b>Chop Wood</b>				
<b>Wash Dishes</b>				

**TELL ME YOUR STORY**

1. Name:

2. Where were you born?

3. When were you born?

4. Do you have brothers and sisters?

5. Where did you live when you were a child?

6. Where did you go to school?

7. How did you get to school?

8. In what ways was school different then?

9. Did you have any hobbies?

10. What were your favorite games and toys?

11. What was your favorite outdoor activity?

12. What chores did you do?

13. Did you have a television? Radio? What were your favorite programs?

14. What is your favorite childhood memory?