

## Oral History of Illinois Agriculture



### Drama Activity

## Illinois State Museum



<http://avbarn.museum.state.il.us>

## *Drama in Oral History*

The inspiration for this activity One of the interviewees in the ISM Oral History of Agriculture database is **Jacqueline Jackson**, a writer and teacher of writing, who grew up on a farm in southern Wisconsin and who lives in Springfield today.

Her popular books, *Stories from the Round Barn*, and *More Stories from the Round Barn*, feature stories she wrote with imagined dialog based on primary sources in her family archives – letters, account books, contracts, etc.

Creating drama and dialogs is a fun way to learn about a new subject — in this case, agriculture of the past and present. It integrates research with imagination and creates a product that even teaches others.

By listening to or viewing farmers' interviews, we gain insight into what farming and rural life was like between 1900 and 2009. For example, many farm wives cooked with wood or coal stoves, washed in boiling water over a wood stove, kept foods cool by storing them in water wells or underground, and wore clothes they sewed themselves.

### Things to Do:

Search or browse for audio or video clips on a topic in the ISM searchable online oral history database and listen or view audio and video clip results on the topic.

Take notes on the clips that tell a story of describe a scene that you like.

Write a dialog on the topic for two or more characters.

There is a video clip of **Jacqueline Jackson** reading an excerpt from her book. Hear how she created stories with dialog from her research and memories.



Jacqueline Jackson of Springfield, Illinois, author

### Special points of interest:

- Inspiration
- Sample Story from an interview
- National and Illinois Learning Standards

## *Sample Story Line for Drama*

<http://avbarn.museum.state.il.us/BioID/80>

**Doug Parrett**, Director of the Agriculture Program at University of Illinois, Champaign, told several stories about growing up on a farm. If you click on the right-hand column clip titled “Chores Can Be Dangerous” you will

hear about how he feared the pigs when he was a little boy, and was assigned his turn at feeding them. You could write a dialog or a monolog on the scene he describes.

Allyn Sweet with Pig, ca. 1895



## *Make Your Own Movie from Your Dialog*

Family members can take the parts of the characters in your drama. They could perform in reader's theater-style and use digital audio to tape it.

Get ambitious and make your own movie with a digital movie camera! Get into costume of the period that you researched online (from photos in the AVBarn's Picture Gallery of the

interviewee you chose).

Rehearse your dialog and get a cameraperson to record the scene.

Edit it in iMovie or MovieMaker, save it, export it as a .flv or other compatible format.

Share it with the world on YouTube, Send ISM the link so we can

add it to our Web viewer's enjoyment. See our section on How to Do Oral History for some tips on making video and our .pdf on digital storytelling.

<http://avbarn.museum.state.il.us/education/oralhistoryhowto/technology>



*Video Equipment for Moviemaking*

## *For Teachers and Parents*

**Assessment:**  
**Rubric:** Dialog will contain facts of a situation heard or viewed in the oral history. Dialog will sound realistic, showing the listener understood the situation in the oral history. Dialog should have accurate syntax

and spelling (dialectic differences allowed).

Students should take notes as they listen or view the oral history, choose the event or situation, listen or view that part again, and sketch out the dialog.

They will then flesh out the dialog, infuse mood and feeling appropriate to the situation and characters. Pairs or groups could read the dialogs aloud for editing purposes.

## *Illinois and National Learning Standards*

### **National Art Standards for Theater: Content Standard 1**

Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history

#### **Achievement Standard**

\* Students individually and in groups, create characters, environments, and actions that create tension and suspense

\* Students refine and record dialogue and action

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## *Illinois and National Learning Standards, cont.*

**ISBE Standards for  
Language Arts – Speaking:  
Middle School 4.B.3a**

Deliver planned oral presentations, using language and vocabulary appropriate to the purpose, message and audience; provide details and supporting information that clarify main ideas; and use visual aids and contemporary technology as support.

**ISBE Descriptors for  
speaking, level 4b:**

- Evaluate and select details appropriate for informing, entertaining and persuading.
- Align vocabulary and

style to the intent of the message.

- Use language that is clear, audible, and appropriate.
- Use appropriate grammar, word choice, and pacing.
- Incorporate appropriate nonverbal expressions that support the message (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact).
- Use notes and outlines.
- Prepare and practice a presentation to fit within a given time limit.
- Use rehearsal techniques (e.g., taking deep breaths, recording or video taping presentation) to plan and practice the presentation.

**ISBE Standards for Fine  
Arts - Drama:**

**Middle School: 26.B.3b:**

Demonstrate storytelling, improvising and memorizing scripted material supported by simple aural and visual effects and personal background knowledge needed to create and perform in drama/theatre.

*The AVBarn Project offers hundreds of educational and entertainment opportunities for the whole family.*

*Oral History creates access to family, regional, and national memories for future generations. Following the oral history guidelines in the AVBarn Website, you can create oral histories of your family's history and experience that your descendants will enjoy and learn from.*