

Oral History of Illinois Agriculture



Art Activity

Illinois State Museum



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

Create a Genre Painting from Oral History

A genre painting is a painting that shows people going about their everyday lives. They are surrounded by the things with which they live, play, and work, doing their everyday activities indoors or outdoors. It is painted as if it all happened on the same day.

This genre painting shows how the family of a gentleman farmer lived in mid-nineteenth-century Illinois. The artist stayed at the house while he designed and painted the picture.

A man is riding his horse. Girls are playing with a doll carriage. A boy and his dog are rolling a hoop. In the background are the buildings of the farm and the plants and animals the live and grow there.



Conrad Roeder (? - 1877)
A.E. Mills House in Alton, Illinois, 1860
oil on canvas, 21 3/4 by 32 3/4 inches
Illinois State Museum Collection Purchase

Getting Started—Searching the Oral Histories and Images

Special points of interest:

- Genre Painting
- Searching the Database
- Primary Documents
- Drawing
- Painting
- Folk Art
- Learning Standards

Create a visualization of the Black Family Homestead in the form of a genre or topographic painting/drawing in the tradition of the nineteenth-century engravings and genre paintings. Learn about the farm's history from the oral interview of the owner that appears in the ISM OHIA AV database.

Search and listen to other audio and video oral history clips on the subject Children's Activities, Women's Work, and Men's Work. Search those topics the Image Gallery to see people in action at work and play.

Search the Audio-Video Barn by using the clip search page, typing in keywords, and/or choosing topics, dates, counties, and people to narrow the search.

Listen or view the resulting clips and learn what games children played on the farm in 1900, for example.

Check the image gallery for images related to the activities you want to include in your painting. Also search the Web for more examples.

Making Your Sketches

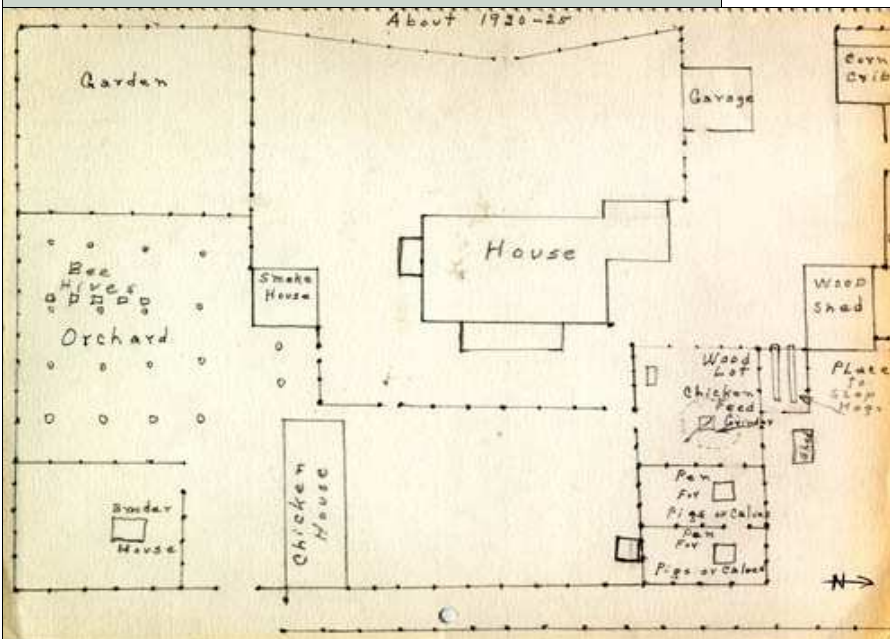
Use the 1925 plan drawing of the Black Farm and the 1890 house photo to understand the layout and function of the farm. Choose one view (north, south, east, or west) from which to draw the sketch for their painting. This involves visualizing the elevation from the overhead view, and keeping parts in scale.

Add to the scene human figures that are involved in activities described in the oral interview clips. Research in print and online sources for period dress styles for the figures.



The Black Family Homestead in the late 1800s. It was built in the style of Elizabeth Black's home in Cumbria, England in 1825.

Below: Diagram of the layout of the farm about 1925. Note where the buildings, gardens, fields, and crops are. You will be transferring this layout to a side elevation view from one direction. For example, if you choose looking West, The chicken House will be in the foreground and the garden will be in the left background.



Tools & Materials

- Sketch paper
- Note paper
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Painting paper or canvas
- Paints of your choice: watercolor, acrylic
- Brushes
- Rags
- Water

- Display mat or frame

Creating Your Painting

After achieving a satisfactory sketch, transfer it to painting paper or canvas to paint in the style of the Conrad Roeder painting described on Page One. The painting can reflect the plan of the Black Farm and House. The composition can reflect a transformation of the original

overhead plan drawing, rather than a general farm plan. Activities can reflect the era as depicted in the oral history clips and images.

The more details you have in your painting, the more lively your period scene.



Learn More About Folk Art

The Illinois State Museum has more Folk Art objects online at <http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/art/htmls/hh.html>.

Heartfelt, Handmade exhibits images of art that were made by some formally-trained artists and by individuals with just informal training at school or home. The Conrad Roeder Genre Painting is in this exhibit, and other images that you could use as inspiration in your painting.

Traditional quilts from the ISM collection are online, too, at: <http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/art/htmls/ks.html>. Your painting could have a quilt folded over a fence or chair on the porch.



Henry Cross
Untitled (Couple in Carriage), 1884
oil on canvas, 23 by 39 inches
Illinois State Museum collection
Illinois State Museum Society purchase

The Sadorus and Sweet Photograph Collections

The Illinois State Museum has a collection of the photography of **Frank Sadorus**, a farmer who considered himself a photographic artist. He took pictures on the farm from 1895 to 1912. This collection is online at: <http://www.museum.state.il.us/ismdepts/art/sadorus/>

These photos show the landscape, fences, buildings, and work and play activities of a small farm in the early 20th century. They could give an artist ideas to include in a genre painting.

As part of the **Oral History of Illinois Agriculture**, the AV Barn contains another Museum collection of Photographs, those of **Geneva Sweet**. Her father-in-law took almost one hundred photographs of their farm near Franklin. Children working and playing, barns, modes of transport, animals, and farm work are captured in these images.



Sadorus Family Activity: Family Band, with Warren on broomstick Elmer on "horn", Grandpa on the washtub and Mary on piano.



The Sweet Farm's neighbor Dora Woods, raised several kinds of chickens. She sold the eggs and chickens in town. These hens are Light Brahmas.

National Art Standards

Content Standard 3: Grades 5-8

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
Achievement Standard

* Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks

* Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

Content Standard 4: Grades 5-8

Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
Achievement Standard

* Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

* Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

* Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

State Learning Standards for Art and Social Studies for Teachers

Art:

27: Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

Middle School: 27.B.3: Know and describe how artists and their works shape culture and increase understanding of societies, past and present.

Descriptor for 27B: Identify the images, objects, sounds, and movements from a work of art and describe what they tell about people, time, places, and everyday life.

26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

Middle School: 26.B.3: Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create 2- and 3-dimensional works and time arts (e.g., film, animation, video) that are realistic, abstract, functional and decorative.

Social Studies Standards:

16D: Understand Illinois, US social history.

Middle School: 16.D3b: Describe the characteristics of different kinds of families in America during the frontier/colonial periods and the nineteenth century.