

The Late 1800s Farm Family and the Economy in New York State

A Learning Experience Using Document-Based Questions

written by

Beth Dunn, Black River Elementary School, Black River, NY
and Kay Staplin, Somers Intermediate School, Somers, NY
July 2000

With assistance from:

David Lewis and Stacy Ward, Manager State Wide Programs
New York State Historical Association

— and —

Patrick Peterson, Director
Holland Patent Teaching and Learning Center

and with funds provided by a grant from the
New York State Archives and Records Administration

The Late 1800s Farm Family and the Economy in New York State

Essential Question: How did the late 1800s Wedderspoon farm family contribute to the local and national economy?

LEARNING CONTEXT

Throughout the 1800s the Wedderspoon family were farmers in Otsego County, New York. The typical farm family at this time consisted of parents, grandparents, children, and hired workers such as farm laborers and domestic laborers. Everyone had a job in the running of the farm.

Most farmers at this time had large farms consisting of 50-70 acres. Some of the crops grown were corn, wheat, maple syrup, apples, potatoes, and hops. The average farmer raised animals such as beef cattle, milking cows, sheep, oxen, and pigs.

A major cash crop on farms at this time was hops. Hops is a major ingredient in the production of beer. By 1880, 80% of the United States production of hops was grown in New York. The farmer hired local people to harvest (pick) the crop. The farm family used the money from the hops to purchase goods at the local store such as medicine, candy, or fancy clothes.

GOALS

1. Describe the typical farm and farm family (Wedderspoon family) in the late 1800s.
2. Discuss in detail the contribution of the late 1800s farm family to the local and national economy.

New York State Social Studies and Performance Indicators

Standard 1 - History of the United States and New York

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate the understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Key Idea 1: The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

Performance Indicator: Explain those values, practices, and traditions that unite all Americans.

Key Idea 3: Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Performance Indicator: Classify information by type of activity: social, political, economic, technological, scientific, cultural, or religious.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this activity, the students will be able to:

1. Complete a document-based question
2. Analyze a series of primary documents
3. Synthesize information from a series of primary documents
4. Complete scaffolding questions based on each document
5. Write an essay citing one more than half (4) of the documents
6. Understand the makeup of a family farm in the late 1800s and its contributions to the local and national economy

Procedure

The actions of students and teachers, and the interactions among and between students and teachers

DAY 1

Time: 60 minutes

- Step 1: Students are given documents 1, 2, and 3. Read the headings on the population census and talk about the information under each. Discuss the makeup of the farm family.
- Step 2: Read the headings on the agricultural census. Discuss how this is different from the population census. Discuss the information under each heading and talk about what the farm was made up of and what it was worth.
- Step 3: Discuss the diagram of the layout of the farm. Talk with the students about the particular buildings that are part of the farm and what they may have been used for. Next, ask the students what has changed from 1858 to 1873, and why they think those changes occurred.
- Step 4: Students will list 4 things they infer about the Wedderspoon farm based on documents 1, 2, and 3 (makeup of late 1800s farm family, makeup of farm, how the farm grew, hops was a leading cash crop). Students will draw their perception of the farm and farm family, labeling as many things as possible.

DAY 2

Time: 60 minutes

- Step 1: Students are given documents 4 and 5. Brainstorm a list of details from the picture and the tickets followed by a class discussion.
- Step 2: Complete the 5W's graphic organizer using information from the documents. Discuss the relationship between the people in the picture and the tickets. Students will identify tickets as a method of payment for hops picking.
- Step 3: Students will play the Hops Picker Ticket Game in which they will assume the roles of hops picker, farmer, and company store clerk. Hops pickers will bring boxes of hops to the farmer. Farmers will give tickets to the hops pickers based on the number of boxes of hops they picked. Hops pickers will then go to the company store clerk to turn in their tickets for money to be used to buy goods at the store.

DAY 3

Time: 60 minutes

- Step 1: Students are given documents 6 and 7. Students will read the steamship receipt. List facts discovered. Discuss the information learned such as 80 bales of hops were sent from New York to London, England (a bigger market), on October 8, 1884, by steamship. Explain that with old documents, the parts that are too small to read are most likely not necessary information, as is the case in this example, and the student should skip over those parts.
- Step 2: Students will read the memorandum from the diary. Discuss the types of items and their cost. Students should get a picture of the time period based on this information. Arrange items according to these categories: food, clothing, sewing supplies, and other.
- Step 3: Discuss the relationship of these two documents. Complete the organizer in order to understand how the shipping of hops was important to Dora. (Hops was a growing cash crop, the farmers made money that they passed on to the picker—Dora—and then she could buy things she wanted or needed.) The students should also realize that others were helped by the growing market of hops, such as the store clerk and the suppliers of the items in the store (soap maker, dress maker, etc.)

DAY 4

Time: 60 minutes

- Step 1: Students will complete a graphic organizer with information learned from the documents.
- Step 2: A class discussion will follow about the makeup of the late 1800s farm family, the farm itself, how hops was a major cash crop, and the connections to the economy.
- Step 3: Explain how documents need to be cited in the essay at the end of the document-based question. Students will understand that supporting historical facts from the documents need to be used. (Document 1 shows that the farm workers lived with the family.)

DAY 5

Time: 90 minutes

- Step 1: Step 1: Students will complete the document-based question about the Wedderspoon family farm and its contributions to the local and national economy.
- Step 2: This assessment will be scored using the New York State Social Studies Rubric.

Resources

A list of primary source documents that were used in this activity

DOCUMENT 1

Biographical Review, Otsego County, NY, Vol II, 1883
Data from New York State Population Census of 1874, Otsego County, NY

DOCUMENT 2

The Wedderspoon Farm by Henry Glassie from the New York Folklore Quarterly Vol 12, No 3

DOCUMENT 3

Data from New York State Agricultural Census of 1875, Otsego County, NY

DOCUMENT 4

Hops Picker Photograph from the New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, NY

DOCUMENT 5

Hops Tickets, New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

DOCUMENT 6

Inman Steamship Company receipt, New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

DOCUMENT 7

Memorandum of Accounts from The Diary of Lucy Medora Walker, January 1862 - December 1862, New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

Additional Resources

Town of Otsego map, Otsego County, NY, Otsego County Atlas, 1868

George I. Wilber letter, New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

Illustration, "Hop Culture in the United States," New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

Hop-Picking Rhyme 1886, New York State Historical Association Special Collections, Cooperstown, NY

Instructional/Environmental Modifications

This activity is geared to students of all ability levels. Students will be examining primary source documents with peer partners or groups. This will ensure that all students have the opportunity to understand the activity. Teachers may wish to include a student with a good ability to read, analyze, and synthesize information in each group. Students with special needs should be addressed as necessary. Modifications such as reading to the student may be required. Teachers may also wish to extend the learning activity for some students who are able to expand the concepts to higher levels. In order to make this activity as student-centered as possible, teachers may wish to begin discussions with student-generated questions that pertain to each document.

Assessment Plan

Ongoing assessments will be teacher's observations of student oral and written responses during this exercise. Teachers should be looking for students to read and accurately interpret historical information from each document and to understand the correlation between several documents on the same topic: how the late 1800s farm family contributed to the local and national economy. The final assessment will be the completion of the document-based question, which consists of constructed response questions and an essay. This will be scored using the New York State Social Studies Rubric.

Document-Based Question: The Family Farm and the Economy in the Late 1800s

This question is based on the accompanying documents (1-7). Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of the question. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the context of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

DIRECTIONS

This document-based question consists of two parts. Part A consists of short answers and Part B is an essay.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Throughout the 1800s the Wedderspoon family were farmers in Otsego County, New York. The typical farm family consisted of parents, grandparents, children, and hired workers such as farm laborers and domestic laborers. Everyone had a job in the running of the farm.

Most farms at this time had large farms consisting of many acres. Some of the crops were corn, wheat, maple syrup, apples, potatoes, and hops. The average farmer raised animals such as beef cattle, milking cows, sheep, oxen, and pigs.

A major cash crop on farms at this time was hops. Hops is a major ingredient in the production of beer. By 1880, 80% of the United States production of hops was grown in New York. The farmer hired local people to harvest (pick) the crop. The farm family spent the money from hops on goods at the local store such as medicine, candy, and fancy clothes.

TASK

Using information from the documents, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, in which you will be asked to:

- Explain how the late 1800s farm family contributed to the local and national economy.
- Identify and explain the makeup of the farm household (family members and other people who live on the farm).
- Name and describe the 1870 family farm buildings and crops.
- Explain how hops provided a cash crop for farmers.

Essential Question: How did the late 1800s Wedderspoon farm family contribute to the local and national economy?

Part A: Short Answer

Using the information from **Documents 1-7**, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions in Part A will help you write the essay in Part B.

QUESTIONS

1. Based on the census shown in **Document 1**, name the people living in the Wedderspoon household and their relationship to the owner of the farm.

2. Using the census information shown in **Document 1**, describe each person's work role on the farm.

3. According to **Document 2**, name and describe the buildings that were part of the family farm in 1858.

4. Name the building that was added to the farm in 1873 as shown in **Document 2**.

5. Based on the agricultural census shown in **Document 3**, name and describe the variety of crops grown on the Wedderspoon family farm.

6. Based on the agricultural census shown in **Document 3**, which crop occupied the most acres on the Wedderspoon family farm?

7. Based on this photograph shown in **Document 4**, what are some observations you can make about hops pickers in the 1800s?

8. Based on the tickets shown in **Document 5**, what conclusions can you make about the hops picker's work day?

9. Based on the steamship receipt shown in **Document 6**, what evidence is there that hops was a significant cash crop for New York State?

10. According to the memorandum in **Document 7**, name several items that Dora bought when her hops-picking tickets were converted into cash.

11. According to the memorandum in **Document 7**, how did Dora's spending her hops-picking money help the local economy?

Part B: Essay

DIRECTIONS

- Write a well-organized essay that includes an introductory paragraph, several paragraphs with supporting historical details from the documents, and a concluding paragraph.
- Use evidence and specific historical details to support your response.
- Cite one more than half (4) of the documents in your essay.
- Proofread your essay for correct grammar, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Throughout the 1800s the Wedderspoon family were farmers in Otsego County, New York. The typical farm family consisted of parents, grandparents, children, and hired workers such as farm laborers and domestic laborers. Everyone had a job in the running of the farm.

Most farms at this time had large farms consisting of many acres. Some of the crops were corn, wheat, maple syrup, apples, potatoes, and hops. The average farmer raised animals such as beef cattle, milking cows, sheep, oxen, and pigs.

A major cash crop on farms at this time was hops. Hops is a major ingredient in the production of beer. By 1880, 80% of the United States production of hops was grown in New York. The farmer hired local people to harvest (pick) the crop. The farm family spent the money from hops on goods at the local store such as medicine, candy, and fancy clothes.

TASK

Use information from your answers under each document in Part A to write an essay in which you will include these main ideas:

- Explain how the late 1800s farm family contributed to the local and national economy.
- Identify and explain the makeup of the farm household (family members and other people who live on the farm).
- Name and describe the 1870 family farm buildings and crops.
- Explain how hops provided a cash crop for farmers.

5Ws Organizer

Directions: Complete the 5Ws organizer about the photograph and the hop tickets.

Title of Document

Title of Document

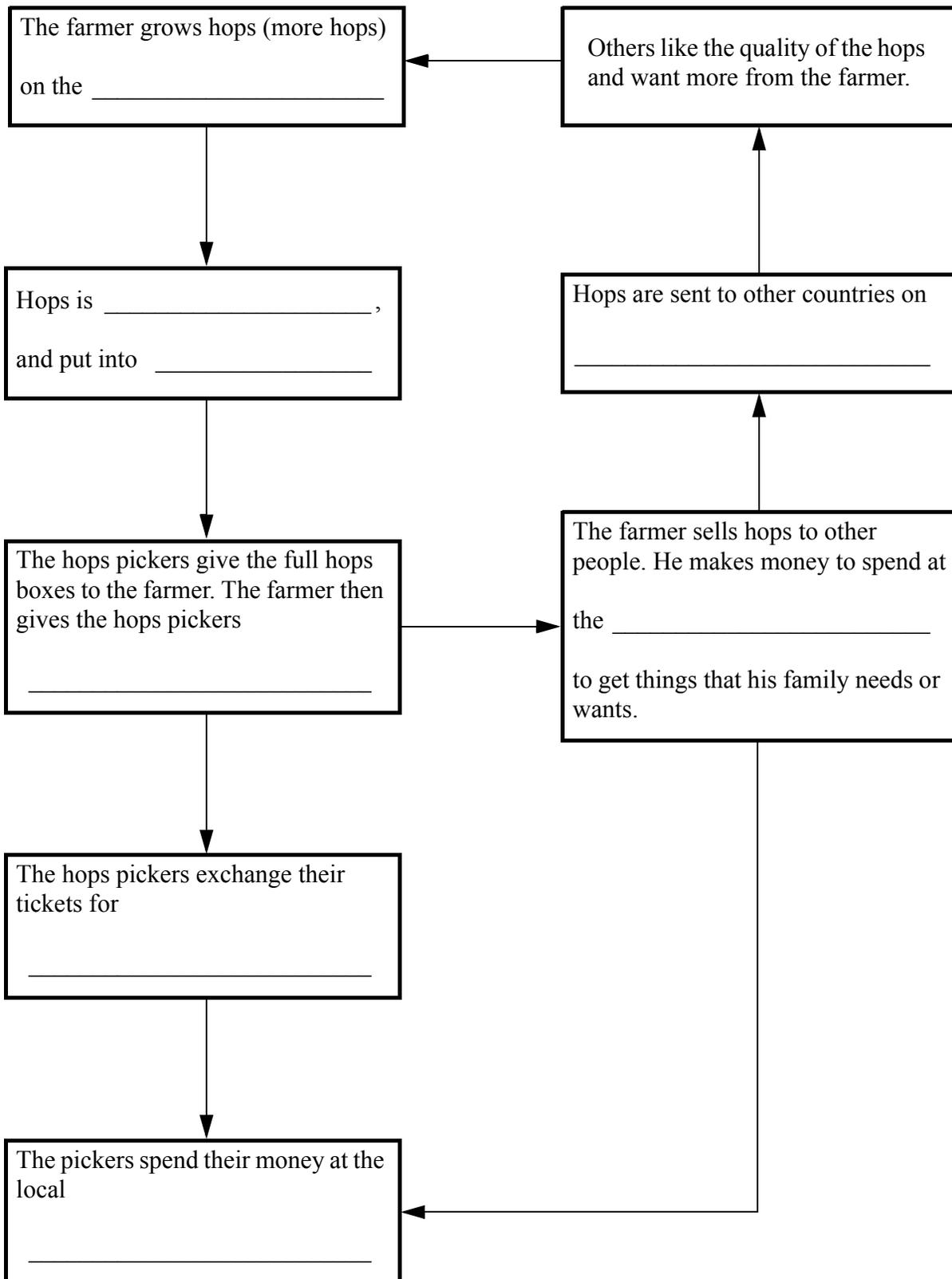
Who

What

Where

When

Why



Graphic Organizer

Directions: Complete the graphic organizer using information from the documents.

