

PLACES of PRIDE
The Work and Photography of Clara Brian
By Margaret Esposito

Lesson ideas can be easily used with the new Illinois Agriculture: Innovation and Invention CD-Rom

Read “A Farm Wife Remembers” by Mrs. Clara Dodson (page xi-xii) recalling her experiences of life on the farm in the 1920’s. Make a detailed chart relating time of day with scheduled activities. Now make a chart detailing a ‘typical’ day of a farm wife today. List the inventions and time saving devices that save everyone time today when performing standard household chores.

“Kitchen clean-up and baby’s bath were worked into that Early morning time too. No running water in the house, no Sink in the kitchen—dishwashing was done in a dishpan on the kitchen table, as was the baby’s bath.”

Mrs. Clara Dodson, page xii

Compare photos on page 90-104 to modern kitchens. What do you see that are similar to what you might have in your kitchen, what is different. Can you spot the reason for time and labor saving devices. Refer to page 29 of the Embedded Resources Guideline. Find that the dishwasher was invented by Josephine Garis Cochran from Shelbyville, Illinois (Shelby County) and debuted at the 1893 World’s Fair. Discuss when did the first modern dishwasher become common in the standard kitchen. (Also see page 197 for a 1922 era clothes washer)

Look at the photo on page 35. Research the year the tractors first outnumbered horses for labor purposes on farms (1954-1955). Does that date surprise you? Discuss the role of horses on farms before 1955 and now. Use the Illinois Horse Ag Mag to further expand on the Equine Industry in Illinois.

Read “Accounting and Management” on p 18-19. Discuss the aspect of ‘culling’ from the flock of chickens. Why is it important to ‘cull’ the flock. Many farm families began to sell chickens, eggs and butter to neighbors ‘in town’ as part of early farm markets. For what would the money from the sale of these products be used? (refer to A Farm Wife Remember page xi second column, last paragraph). How do farm families continue to look for additional income to enhance farm income? Examine the photos on page 57-61. How do current egg production methods resemble these photos? How have they changed?

Examine the photos on page 136-151 and compare the school lunch programs on from the 1920's to your school lunch program today. Research the modern school lunch program (originally passed as the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act is a United States federal law signed by President Harry S. Truman in 1946) and compare the photos in the book to your current school program. How have things changed? What would you most enjoy of the school program as shown in the book? What roles would students have had in this lunch program?

Examine the photos on page 114-123. Discuss the aspect of modern indoor plumbing. My favorite photo is page 121. Notice the title back-house and catalogue. You might have to share more details with students than you are comfortable with! Why not make this a 'webquest'. Be sure to check out www.toiletpaperworld.com. (I'm serious!!)

Page 16 discusses the Flu Epidemic of 1918. Examine the role of the local farm community is assisting in local disaster recovery efforts. Photos on page 181-183 can also be used in discussing this topic

“One picture was taken of a corn dump, showing how a load of corn can be put into the crib in five minutes time. This same farm had a windmill which pumped water to the stock in the barn yard, but there was no facilities for getting the water into the house except as it was carried in by the bucket full.” Page 15.

Discuss why improvements might have been made to the farm first. Why didn't improvements to the home come first?

Page 15 second column paragraph 3 relates to the household equipment that was considered modern and improving. Make a list of items that you use on a regular basis that are on this list. What would you use if these items were not readily available? In the next paragraph Miss Brian advocates water in every home, a clothes washer, a simple iron, and a written schedule of meals—how many of these items do you currently use? What seem like outlandish ideas?

Enjoy these and other ideas—simply as discussion starters!

If you think of more ideas to use with this book—please share them with Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom. E-mail us at kdaugherty@ilfb.org!