

# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

## *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

7/29/09

### **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

**Characters Educational Theatre:** *Caroline Ingalls*

**Grade levels:** 3-5

Many children have grown up reading the Little House series books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. This program gives students a chance to meet her mother, Caroline, and to learn more about pioneer life during the mid- and late-1800s. Caroline will reminisce about family and community customs, Indian lands, children's manners, primitive living conditions, and even personal encounters with wild animals.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To enrich the Little House books by providing the literary, historical and personal context in which Laura Ingalls Wilder conceived and wrote them.
2. To offer the experience of living 19th century American history.
3. To broaden learning experiences in other subject areas through drama.

### **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *School in 1865*

Teach a lesson as if it is 1865. Have students use only chalk and black paper (as chalkboards). Make sure students follow all of your instructions (even if they seem ridiculous). Discuss with your students the difference between school in the late 1800's and today.

### **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:** *Pioneer Skills and Education*

Have the students compare their talents and skills to the talents and skills of children in the 1800s. How are they different? Why are they different? How are they the same, or what links them together? Discuss whether the skills of the Pioneer children would be useful today and vice versa.

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

English, Language Arts, History and Social Science, Theater, Women's Studies

## PRE-ACTIVITY - SCHOOL IN 1865

**LEARNING GOAL:**

To understand what life was like in the pioneer days

**MATERIALS/PREPARATION:**

Black construction paper, chalk

**TIME:**

1 hour

**TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:**

- \* The lesson should be simple, but should relate to what you normally teach. For example, if you have been doing multiplication, teach it.
- \* Make sure students understand that they are pretending that it is 1865 and whatever you say they should do - even if it seems strange.

**STEP 1:**

**Read** an excerpt from one of Laura Ingalls Wilder's books.

**STEP 2:**

**Ask** students what they think school was like in the 1800's. Do you think the students got dropped off by buses or their parents? Was there a cafeteria? Were there computers in the classroom?

**STEP 3:**

**Distribute** pieces of black construction paper and chalk to each student. Have them put all other writing utensils and paper away.

**STEP 4:**

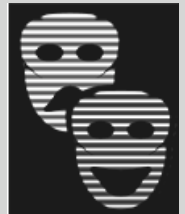
**Conduct** a simple lesson. Tell your students that the class is going to pretend that it is 1865. Tell them they can only use chalk and the black paper (mini black boards). You might want to assign students to pretend they are in different grades.

**STEP 5:**

**Discuss** with students the differences between school in 1865 and today. Have them imagine having no heat in the winter, having to go outside to use the bathroom, etc.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- 1) **Trace** some of the appliances back to their earliest ancestors. Some are rooted in antiquity; others were not invented until Ma Ingalls' time or later.
- 2) **Compare** how the food products are produced and acquired now with how they were produced then.
- 3) **Teach** your class a simple square dance like the Virginia Reel. Have students make up their own square dance calls.



## POST-ACTIVITY - PIONEER SKILLS AND EDUCATION

### LEARNING GOAL:

To understand the differences between the talents and skills of Pioneer children with the talents and skills of children today

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Whiteboard or chalkboard, markers or chalk (for writing lists)

### TIME:

45 minutes

### STEP 1:

Ask each student to make a list of every item they can recall in one room of their house. Next, through discussion, writing, and/or research, bring students to the understanding that in 1865:

- a) many of these items did not exist, or existed in a different form
- b) even if they did exist, they would not have been owned by a pioneer family or would have been considered a luxury
- c) almost all the items would have been made by someone in the family - maybe even by the students themselves!

### STEP 2:

Have students list the skills needed to make some of the items. Remind them that the house itself was likely made by the family as well. Point out that by the time a child was 8 years old, he or she became almost as skilled as his/her parents at performing these tasks!

### STEP 3:

Have the students list the modern-day skills they have. Ask them to underline any skills that might have been used on the prairie in the 1860's. Then underline any skills from the first list (from Step 2) that we still use today (if any).

### STEP 4:

Put a star next to a skill an 1860's child might have that you would like to learn. Discuss how it would be useful today. Discuss how one might learn this skill, and why certain people do still use the skill and can teach it to others.

### EXTENSIONS:

- 1) **Note** some of the ordinary things Ma had to do each day. What were some of the heroic things she did?
  
- 3) **Find** household and farm tools from the 1880's. List the uses of the objects and make copies of the list without naming the items. Give each group a copy of the list, let them inspect the objects, then try to match each object with its function.



## Characters Educational Theatre: *Caroline Ingalls*

Grade levels: 3-5

### RESOURCES:

Anderson, William. Prairie Girl: The Life of Laura Ingalls Wilder. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

Ingalls Wilder, Laura. Little House on the Prairie. 1935.

Strom Collins, Carolyn and Wyss Eriksson, Christina. The World of Little House. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996.

Strom Collins, Carolyn and Wyss Eriksson, Christina. Inside Laura's Little House. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000.

### VOCABULARY:

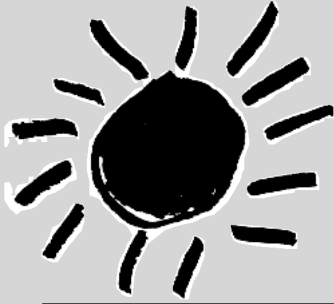
haycock	velocipede	"boughten"	saleratus	fascinator
reticule	nigh ox	off ox	gee	haw
mattock	ambrotype	soddy	"beeves"	suffrage
temperance	puncheon floor	dust devils	mosquito bar	nankeen
ought (a number)	spider (not the creature with eight legs)		"flour doings"	

### ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a former teacher, Marcia Estabrook began performing her characters in 1982. In addition to her Characters Educational Theatre performances, Marcia has been a featured storyteller at the Three Apples and the Big Apple Storytelling Festivals, the John F. Kennedy Library, the Old South Meeting House, the Martin Van Buren Historical Site in Kinderhook, NY, the Deerfield Museum, Old Sturbridge Village, Channel 5's "Tank Away" and Fox 25's "Americana". Marcia has been the keynote speaker at the New England Kindergarten Conference and has also performed and conducted workshops at the CT Storytelling Festival. Marcia appeared in "The Raven and the Dove" and "Town Called a River". She has consulted for the Rhode Island Children's Museum and the National Park Service. Marcia is a member of Solo Together and Historical Entertainments, and is proud to have been twice a nominee for the National Performer of the Year Award from Young Audiences.

### ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YAMA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has been serving as a link between teaching artists and the region's school children, providing dance, storytelling, music and theater programs to children in schools, libraries and hospitals in the form of assembly performances, workshops and residencies. The organization's mission is to encourage lifelong engagement with the arts by making them an integral part of every child's education.



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

255 Elm Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA 02144

(617) 629-YAMA (9262)

[www.yamass.org](http://www.yamass.org)

## MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

### Characters Educational Theatre: *Caroline Ingalls*

<i>Language Arts 2</i>	...pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions.
<i>Language Arts 3</i>	...make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>Language Arts 13</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction material.
<i>History 1</i>	Chronology and Cause...understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect.
<i>History 2</i>	Historical Understanding...understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history.
<i>History 4</i>	Society, Diversity, Commonality, and the Individual...learn the complex interplay that has existed from the beginning of our country between American ideals and American practice.
<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theater vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.