



A Day in a One-Room Schoolhouse
Marathon County Historical Society Living History Learning Project

1904 Schoolroom

Information Packet For Virtual Visits



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Mary Forer: Executive Director

Note to Participants

This packet contains information students can use to prepare for an off-site experience of a one-room school. They may be used by classroom teachers to approximate the experience without traveling to the Little Red Schoolhouse. They are available here for students who might be unable to attend in person for any reason. In addition, these materials may be used by anyone interested in remembering or exploring educational experiences from more than a century ago.

The usual lessons at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Marathon Park are taught by retired local school teachers and employees of the Marathon County Historical Society in Wausau, Wisconsin. A full set of lessons has been video-recorded and posted to our YouTube channel, which you can access along with PDFs of accompanying materials through the Little Red Schoolhouse page on our website. These PDFs may be printed for personal or classroom educational purposes only.

- ♦ *If you have any questions, please call the Marathon County Historical Society office at 715-842-5750 and leave a message for Anna or Sandy, or email Sandy at sblock@marathoncountyhistory.org.*

On-Site Schoolhouse Daily Schedule

9:00 am	Arrival Time. If you attended the Schoolhouse in person, the teacher would ring the bell to signal children to line up in two lines, boys and girls, in front of the door. Everyone would recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Students would then file into school, girls first. They would take their places in rows of desks, girls on one side, boys on the other side.
9:30 am	Reading and Recitation using McGuffey's Eclectic Readers.
10:00 am	Arithmetic problems using lap slates.
10:30 am	Recess with turn-of-the-century games and bathroom break.
11:00 am	Penmanship exercises using dip pens and ink.
11:45 am	Lunch with free play and bathroom break.
12:30 am	Geography and Current Events using a turn-of-the-century map.
1:00 pm	Old-fashioned Spelling Bee.
1:45 pm	Chores including re-stocking of wood stove and general clean-up of the classroom and schoolhouse grounds.
2:00 pm	School Dismissed.

Introduction to the Little Red Schoolhouse

The Little Red Schoolhouse program is a part of the Marathon County Historical Society's Living History Learning Project. This project educates children and adults about history by allowing them to participate in historical activities, and to see first-hand how people lived and worked in the past. The Little Red Schoolhouse program is a wonderful example of "living history," where students and teachers are invited to experience a one-room schoolhouse, including lessons plans, costumes, and other period activities. During the program, school is taught as it was in 1904.

About One-Room Schoolhouses

One-room schoolhouses were formed from a 1787 ordinance that said, "being necessary to good government, and the happiness of mankind, school and the means of education shall forever be preserved." Settlers in the Midwest took this ordinance to heart and developed a particularly strong concern for education. As each new settlement was formed, a school district was set up and a means for education was provided. Much of the time, schools in rural areas were governed by rural farmers who had little or no education themselves. Nevertheless, these farmers were determined that their children should learn how to read, write, and do arithmetic.

Because of their rural setting, one-room schools were often thought of as poor, unfortunate places where an education was mediocre at best. This was not the case. The one-room setting of these schools was often an advantage. In these country schools, students had more flexibility between grades. Students were advanced based on their abilities, not on their ages. Students who excelled could sit with older students and students who needed more help could sit with younger students. Since everybody was in the same room, it really didn't matter who was in what class.



Inside the Classroom

The video orientation (search for Marathon County History on YouTube, or find the link on our website www.marathoncountyhistory.org) shows Mrs. Heidemann explaining the origins of the building used for in-person Little Red Schoolhouse experiences. The building was originally the Spooner School in western Marathon County, built in 1894. As the population grew and larger schools were built, one-room schoolhouses across the area were often repurposed, some as homes for families. After being vacated, the Spooner School was eventually moved to Marathon Park.

Mrs. Heidemann shows students around the classroom. She demonstrates that students in 1904 would get a drink of water from a common bucket and dipper, shows homemade lye soap for handwashing after using the outhouse, lists typical chores for children at home, and talks about school rules and discipline measures for those who misbehaved. Children today appreciate comparing and contrasting their own lifestyles with those of children more than a century ago.

Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Current Events of 1904

- ◆ The World's fair is held in St. Louis, Missouri.
- ◆ The Olympic Games are held in the United States for the first time.
- ◆ Theodore Roosevelt is elected to his second term as president.
- ◆ Helen Keller graduates from Radcliffe College.
- ◆ Work Begins on the Panama Canal.
- ◆ New York City's subway system opens.
- ◆ Clara Barton resigns as head of the Red Cross.
- ◆ Stainless steel is invented by the French scientist Leon Guillet.
- ◆ Trans-Siberia Railway is completed after 13 years of construction.
- ◆ National law is passed that prohibits Indians from purchasing alcohol or entering saloons.
- ◆ The first United States battleship, the "Iowa," is commissioned.

What other information can you find that helps you understand what Wisconsin was like in the late 1800s and early 1900s? Think about dress, recreation, food, education, transportation, and current events. Choose one topic for further research and share with someone else or with your class.

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THANK YOU TO THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY MUSEUM OF EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN,
FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING OUR ACTIVITY PACKET.

EVALUATION SHEET

Thank you for participating virtually in the One-Room Schoolhouse Learning Program!

Please fill out and return to: Marathon County Historical Society
Attn: Anna Chilsen-Straub
410 McIndoe Street
Wausau WI 54403

DATE PARTICIPATED: _____ SCHOOL: _____

AGE/GRADE LEVEL: _____

Please check here _____ if you participated “on your own” and not as a school-related function.

1. Please describe briefly your method using these lessons. For example, did you watch the videos at school or at home? All in one day or over time? In a group or individually?
2. How did you use the activity packets? Please list any comments you may have.
3. Which aspects of the materials provided were the most effective in understanding what it was like in a one-room school environment?
4. Which materials were the least effective, and how do you think they could be improved?
5. What follow-up activities do you plan to use to reinforce or extend this learning experience?
6. How would you rate the overall virtual materials?
 Excellent Very Satisfactory Satisfactory Fair Poor
7. Any additional comments?