



INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Have you ever stopped to imagine what it might have been like to be a boy or girl in Saratoga County during your great, great grandparents' time (150 to 200 years ago)? Probably if you had lived then, spring would be a special time. You would be thinking about playing out of doors, about new baby animals in the barn, and about the ways in which you would be getting ready for summer. In addition to these "fun" activities, you would also be thinking about your springtime jobs or chores. Your job might have been helping your parents prepare the garden for planting. Another chore you might have to do probably wouldn't enter your mind today---it's sheep shearing! The following instructional format will prepare you not only to learn about sheep shearing but also all that goes into processing the sheep's wool into a finished garment.

MATERIALS:

- Graphic Organizer on Meeting Basic Needs
- Reading - "On a Sunny Day in May"
- Graphic Organizer for Wool Processing
- Primary Source Documents – Sheep Census Records

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand that many people living in Saratoga County 150 to 200 years ago had to work hard to meet their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.
- To experience the steps in processing wool from 'sheep to shawl' by observation and hands-on activities including shearing, washing, spinning, and weaving the wool.

LEARNING STANDARDS

- Social Studies 1.1
- Social Studies 1.4

SETTING THE STAGE:

PREVISIT: Using the Graphic Organizer on Meeting Basic Needs, have the class brainstorm and list man's basic needs. Then focus on the ways in which we satisfy these needs in today's world. Special attention should be given to the clothing need, as that will relate to the overall objectives.

Discuss with the students how they think basic needs were met by settlers in the early 1800s. Introduce the concept of self-sufficiency. Record the student's responses on the board. Special attention again should be given to the clothing need. Tell the students that they will be learning more about how early settlers met their clothing need by reading a short passage about wool processing and working on a group activity. Inform the students that they will come back to the initial responses when they have finished investigating wool processing.

STRATEGIES/PROCEDURES:

PREVISIT: Divide the class into collaborative groups of two or three students (should be eight groups). Distribute the reading, "On a Sunny Day in May". Each group should read the passage and complete (except for the last column "What was the result?") the Graphic Organizer for Wool Processing. Each group will then be asked to report about one of the steps to the class. Finally, refer to the original student responses on the board. Ask students if there is anything they would change or add. Have them defend their answers. Also discuss whether the students would like to have lived in the 1800s.

POSTVISIT: After the field trip to Brookside, reassemble the collaborative groups and have them complete the last column of the organizer. Then use this as a basis of a follow-up discussion of the field trip and wool processing.

USING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS TO GAIN INFORMATION:

Pre or Post Visit: Look at the documents from the Census of the State of New York 1875 and use Tables 60 & 61 to answer the questions on the Primary Source Document Worksheet.