

Barn

Preparation:

- Arrive 30 minutes before students are scheduled to arrive
- Open door, push in on lock and jerk open
- Open other doors and prop open, place metal stops on the foundation rocks.
- Open shutters (only if needed for light) by removing two large nails on each side of the frame and unlatching
- Be sure shoe repair implements (hammer and lasts) and rabbit trap are in place on the benches.
- Get one ear of corn for each group from the covered can and place near the huller.
- Have the small empty bucket under the grinder, and large empty bucket under the huller
- Rig-up the rope making boards by cutting 6 strands of binding twine approximately 10 -12 feet long. Tie two to each of the three hooks on both ends. Lay out and wait for kid power.

When students arrive:

- Greet students and introduce yourself as aunt or uncle....
- Stand in the east door area and explain what a two crib barn is (barn with two log cribs to hold corn or hay)Take note of two other more modern types of barns (the gambrel roofed barn to the north at the hospital, and the metal building belonging to MSU to the southeast. In a two crib barn, the center is open at both ends where a wagon can drive through and unload into the cribs (up high or down low).
- Discuss the rabbit trap, how it was rigged with a carrot or other bait, tripped as the rabbit tries to get the food, then the door drops. A child could trap rabbits and sell the skins for spending money (no allowances) or trade for goods. Also a way children could help supply meat/money. Children like to trip the trap.
- Demonstrate how shoes were repaired at home with the leather cut to fit the sole and tacked on the last to bend nails down so as not to stick in one's foot. Another piece of leather placed on the inside. Different sizes for adults and children. The advent of left and right shoes didn't come into existence until 1818.
- In the southeast quadrant, tell about some of the crop growing tools. Point out the plow, harrow, and planter. Today these are replaced with work done by a tractor. When the crops came up, they were cultivated by hand with the hoe and chopper. When time to harvest they used the scythes, one had a cradle which catches the grain where it can be bundled and tied.

- The Springfield Wagon was used in farming and also to transport goods and people. Note the curved stays on the wall above, which were inserted in the brackets on the side where the upper board is now attached. This wagon is rigged for two horses with a double-tree. It can be used with a single tree. The wrench which helps hold the tongue on the wagon is used to remove the lugs on the wheels like on today's cars. The padded brake shoe works like brakes on cars. (Demonstrate releasing and setting the brake) The docent talks about using the wagon jack, like a car jack, emphasizing how such a small tool can lift a quarter of a ton. Do not use the jack. Just place it under the axle, but not touching it, and show the lifting motion. No one is allowed to climb on the wagon.
- In the southwest corner room, children can pitch hay from one side of the room to the other. Only one child at a time in the room while this activity is going on. Students can enter this section of the barn by climbing over the steps (stile). Discuss that these were placed over fence lines for easier access while keeping animals out. Discuss the importance of hog killing in the fall, and the use of the hog hanger and hair scraping tool. While some children are hulling corn, two at a time can demonstrate the principle of the ratio of weight lifting by one child hanging on the hog hanger and the other pulling him/her up with the block and pulley.
- Hulling and grinding corn: Not everyone can get a chance to hull, but all can grind. Sometimes it is best to grind the cornmeal again to make it finer. While some grinding, others can use the sharpening stone to sharpen wooden knives. Note, every metal tool had to be kept sharp to make the work go easier.
- The northeast room contains tools related to building log buildings: the broadax to cut the hew logs, the crosscut saw for cutting logs, the buck saw for smaller wood, the auger to drill holes for the wooden pegs to hold logs together, the mallet and froe to make shingles, the drawing horse and knife to shape wood, and small handmade tools for finishing.
- Rope making: Takes a minimum of three students. One at the end with the stationary hook and two on the moveable end. Place one hand on the front board and the other grasping with the thumb on top and fingers underneath. This way no fingers get in the way. Make a circular motion clockwise with the backboard keeping it in the same position. Each child gets a chance to twist. It takes the first two groups for his phase. Then transfer the two outside ends to the center hook on both end boards. Then the last two groups turn the board counter clockwise. When all is twisted tight remove and knot the loose ends. There is time for this activity if you hurry students along. Other children keep the lines from tangling. Give the rope to the adult to take back to school for rope jumping. During this activity ask the children where rope is used on the farm (pulley, tying animals, rope bed, pulling up well buckets, jumping rope, swing, making harnesses).

Sometimes it is better to do this activity at the end with all children participating and eating the cornbread.

- Play horseshoes. Show students the various sizes of horseshoes and that one is the mule shoe (more square with points on the bottom for traction. Hammer the metal stake on the ground outside the barn. Give each student one horseshoe. Have them toss the shoe underhanded toward the stake. The closest to the stake wins.

Closing the barn:

Empty the cornmeal containers. Be sure boxes are clean of all corn. Sweep out the main area of the barn. Shut the shutters and secure them with nails and latch. Close big doors and slip wood through the brackets, replace metal stops. Lock the north door with the combination lock. Test to make sure it is secure.