Simple Pleasures

Sometimes it's fun to pretend that we could make three wishes and get anything in the world that we wanted! Video games! A race car! All the comic books in the store! But if you think about what made you happy today, it was more likely a small thing. A joke told by a friend. Running on the playground in the sunshine. Petting your dog. These little things can be the most important part of our day. Running on the playground is a great reward after taking a spelling test. A joke told by a friend is fun after sitting still all during dinner. Adults call these little things "simple pleasures." At Living History Farms, we are going to spend the whole year thinking about the simple things that made people happy a long time ago and the ones that make us happy today!

What were the little things which made kids happy a hundred years ago? If we look around in the Tangen House or Flynn Mansion, we find dolls and toys for kids in 1875. At the General Store and Drug Store, we find candy and foods kids could eat. At the 1900 Farm and 1850 Farm, we find furry or feathery animals. There are jobs on the farm that kids did, like hunting for eggs in the chicken coop or pumping water in the yard. We think those things look fun to us now, but did kids really enjoy them a long time ago? We can look in kids' diaries for some clues!

In 1907, Clara Hinton was 13 years old and lived in Hedrick, Iowa. On May 2, Clara wrote, "It is a very nice warm day and the bees are humming and the birds are singing. I have been looking around hunting flowers . . . It is so nice outdoors. I can hardly stay in the house." In her diary that day she drew a picture of flowers and wrote 65 degrees next to it. These simple things had made her very happy!
Mary Griffith was only 16 years old in the year 1880. That's nearly over 136 years ago! She lived in a little town called Harlan, Iowa. Mary wrote on January 30, 1880, "This has been a beautiful day." Why? She had taken a sleigh ride to visit a friend on a farm nearby. She wrote, "It is the nicest and longest sleigh ride I ever had. Our ponies skipped over the prairie. The trees and grass sparkled like diamonds." Would simply being outside in warm weather or taking a long sleigh ride make you happy now?

We might think kids living on farms long ago had to work all the time and didn't have time for little happy things - after all they did not have computers or cell phones. Kids did help with chores. But sometimes the work was fun! On July 30, 1906, Clara Hinton wrote, "Gene (her brother) went to the farm for plums in the morning. I made doll dresses, practiced music lesson, etc. After dinner, I peeled plums, plums, plums, plums." The next day, she wrote "Washed dishes. Stirred plum butter, practiced music lesson." She enjoyed doing these chores well! Are there jobs that you like to doing, even though it's work?

Simple fun is different for everyone. Some things that Clara hated to do, might actually be really fun for us! Stirring jelly, washing dishes in a dish pan or ironing are fun for people in 2018 to try! Clara probably thought it was just work. Clara wrote that doing math at school was not fun for her, but some kids really like to do math, even without a calculator! So this year, we want you to have fun exploring little things, both work and play, at home and here at the museum. Play the games that kids a hundred years ago loved! Discover some historic crafts and try farm chores and think about how people in the past felt about doing the same thing. Is it a simple pleasure or not? Together, we'll find those little things that make our day a little more fun!

Mary Griffith Diary and Clara Hinton Diary, quoted from University of Iowa Digital Library and the State Historical Society of Iowa Collections http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/diaries.

**Upcoming Events**

**March 17, 2018 - National Ag Day**
Celebrate farmers and farming with a visit to LHF! We will be showing off with livestock demonstrations, tractor displays, and hands-on activities from several community agricultural organizations. Selected townsfolk in Walnut Hill will open their doors for visitors. Tickets go on sale February 13 at 10am.

**National Ag Day**

**March 31, 2018 - Family Easter**
Enjoy toy hunts, preschool Bunnyland, live animals, horse and wagon rides, and traditional games. Enjoy storytime with IPTV's Dan Wardell and explore a few shops in Walnut Hill too! Tickets go on sale February 27 at 10am.

**Family Easter**

**History Detectives**

Good detectives pay attention. What can investigating eyes discover? In this newsletter, we've talked about small, every day things that make us happy! Here are some photographs of small parts of bigger things. Visit the museum on National Ag Day and search the Tangen House to see if you can find these toys and games kids could play for fun in 1875!

**Craft: Make Your Own Diary**
Make your own Diary!
Follow our instructions and craft your own simple diary to write in. Then see if you can write and draw in a diary for a week to remember your own simple pleasures.

Diary Craft Instructions

Read Other Kids' Diaries
You can learn more about what Iowa's kids wrote in the diaries in the past by visiting The University of Iowa Digital Library. You'll find 11 different diaries in their collection. You may need to read the diaries with an adult. These diaries are written in cursive hand-writing!

Visit the Diaries Collection

Try this: Spencerian Handwriting Practice

Children in the 1800s were taught to write in cursive handwriting. This fancy style was called Spencerian writing, after P.R. Spencer, the man who designed it. Even adults would practice their writing to make it really fancy. It was a pleasure to get a letter written in nice handwriting and a pleasure to write a pretty letter, note card or invitation. To practice their writing kids first learned to make rows of circles ovals and slanted lines called push-pulls. They practiced drawing nice round ovals and slanted push-pulls without picking the pen up from the paper. Sometimes these exercises were made on a slate, a little personal blackboard, with a piece of chalk or slate pencil. Using a pencil or a pen, see if you can make rows of spirals and nice even push pulls on a piece of writing paper.
**Word Search**

**Word Search - Printable PDF**

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UASJNCBKSEGKTP
EEROHCSDHIACPJSNJ
GNIRPSOVYXMELDZ
KEVERYDAYSPEKFO
PXBQUCSVPGBPLTS
ORHGIELSEBLYREY
LVABJRFRLWINTE
OPAIABLEUPVGPGP
OLGBRMSROODTUOE
LETSUIRAKWXQMS
SATBHHEASUEYXDN
ASKYYOBDFODREIV
DUUAEKNUSDASC
TRSPARLDEFOSORA
GEBHAPPYKCXXYYI
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**Simple**

**Pleasure**

**Sleigh**

**Happy**

**Flowers**

**Prairie**

**Chore**

**Bumblebees**

**Farm**

**Diary**

**Spring**

**Winter**

**Everyday**

**Outdoors**

**Sparkled**

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**Coloring Sheet**

Check out this month's printable coloring sheet. Download the PDF with the link below, print the page, and start coloring!

**Download your coloring sheet**