

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR TRUNK USE

The Challenge--Everyone who utilizes this trunk may have very distinctive goals and activities in mind for a specific curricular need. Some of you will have a writing focus; others, a literature study; and some, a historical perspective. Regardless of your motive, we encourage you to utilize as little or as much of the trunk resources as you want. Let your imagination guide you. We have included a few ideas for possible inclusion in your classroom or with your home school students. If you tell us how you used the trunk resources, we would be glad to keep adding your ideas to these pages for future reference.

1. **Writing Focus**--Although specifically designed for upper elementary grades, the writing curriculum (black 3-ring binder) and suggested activities can be taken and modified for your grade and curricular offerings. Here are some writing ideas for older students.
 - A. See the Curriculum Notes in the black notebook for ideas.
 - B. Have students choose one of Mrs. Aldrich's short stories and read it. Write a summary of the short story and create a picture that is symbolic of one of the more interesting elements of the story. Explain the picture's significance to the story to classmates.
 - C. Take one of the Solomon Butcher photographs and assign students to write a creative story where the photograph would be a suitable visual enhancement for their story.
 - D. After reviewing the format/content of a personal letter, have the students write a letter or email to the Aldrich Foundation Board or Executive Director requesting additional information about Mrs. Aldrich, trunk content, or website information. Be sure to include an email address so a response or attachments can be expediently returned to the student.
 - E. Review the short story contest guidelines, and write a short story in the style of Mrs. Aldrich and submit it to the Bess Streeeter Aldrich Short Story Competition.
 - F. Identify 10 segments of an Aldrich book or story where the word choice seems old-fashioned or out of date. Rewrite the segment with an equivalent up-to-date, more contemporary vocabulary showing an understanding of the content.

2. **Aldrich, the Writer**--The Bess Streeeter Aldrich content is designed to provide students with more information about Mrs. Aldrich while exploring resources that are available at the Aldrich House and Museum. A short 15-minute video has been uploaded to YouTube and provides a background of the author (the Youtube link is provided in your resources). A much longer video follows the first video (about 45 minutes), and it is more suited for those who want Elmwood history.
 - A. Compare and Contrast Mrs. Aldrich or one of her stories to another Nebraska Author and one of his/her stories. Did they write at the same period? Where did they live? Were their topics similar? What motivated them to write? How many works have been published? How have they been recognized within the state and/or nation? Is there material still relevant today?
 - B. Utilize the information in the trunk to contact the Aldrich Foundation and ask for a copy of an original letter and/or article about Mrs. Aldrich. Share your findings and what you learned about Mrs. Aldrich with your classmates.

- C. Review Mrs. Aldrich's biography and watch the 15-minute video about her and then create a "Jeopardy-type" PowerPoint that asks questions about Mrs. Aldrich, her family, her writing, her home and time in Elmwood, and other miscellaneous questions.
 - D. Create a timeline that reflects Mrs. Aldrich's life and significant dates of her writing: birth, education, marriage, moves, birth of children, book publishing, and death.
 - E. Plan a field trip at the Aldrich House. Consider asking for the character tour when one of guides welcomes guests to her home as Mrs. Aldrich. Ask about lunch options, museum and house tours, garden activities and other local attractions including the GAR Hall Veterans' Museum (one of two remaining in Nebraska).
3. **The Homesteading Movement**—A number of resources in the trunk help students have a better understanding of the Homestead Movement, a topic that Mrs. Aldrich addressed in *A LANTERN IN HER HAND* and several of her other stories and books. We have created a Then and Now PowerPoint that can be accessed from our website that compares antique artifacts to those used today. In fact, we have a trunk of similar artifacts at the Aldrich House that can be used as an activity if you visit. The Solomon Butcher book provides amazing period pictures. The vintage games included in the trunk provide examples of early games.
- A. Watch the "Then and Now PowerPoint" referenced in the Traveling Trunk (on the Foundation's Website). Challenge the students (break into teams if desired) to bring artifacts to class to stump their classmates. Create your own PowerPoint and/or traveling trunk to present to other student groups in your school.
 - B. Divide in groups and play the period games or the Stake a Homestead game. Ask students to reflect on the games. Have you played these before? Why were these games popular during the Homestead period? Are there similar games today?
 - C. Select and copy several photographs from the Solomon Butcher book and provide each student with one, two or three (based on the number of students you are working with). Have the students label each artifact in the photograph and determine whether each artifact was mentioned or would resemble those in *A LANTERN IN HER HAND*. What items are specifically Nebraska, why? Are any of the items still used today? If so, are they the same or do they differ? Visit a local museum. How many of the artifacts can be found there?
 - D. *A LANTERN IN HER HAND* spans several generations. Create a family tree that shows the lineage of Abbie and Will Deal. Likewise create your family tree. Can you go back as far as the same timeline (Nebraska Homesteading Period, circa 1860)?
 - E. While reading *A LANTERN IN HER HAND* or another Aldrich book, watch for reference to period-appropriate Nebraska references: flora, fauna, landmarks, weather phenomena, quilt pattern references, musical selections, transportation, school facts, attire, tools, waterways, framing of the state etc. Pick five topics that were related to the Homesteading period and/or the development of Nebraska as a state from the book and create a collage. Write a summary of the collage explaining your choices and their reference in *A LANTERN IN HER HAND*.

4. **Literature** --Although most of Mrs. Aldrich's books and short stories are still available for purchase from various companies, we know the books are not always accessible when you need them. You don't always have enough time to read a whole book. That is why we chose to include three books with Aldrich short stories. Consider taking one or distributing multiple Aldrich stories to your students. In the future if you need extra copies of a book, contact the Aldrich Foundation because we keep many on hand at the Aldrich House and would be glad to loan, rent, or sell to you (based on your intended purpose).
- A. Read an Aldrich short story, create a dust jacket for the story, write a one-paragraph summary, and develop a 10-question quiz about the story (provide teacher with the answers). The teacher will re-distribute the stories and questions among the students. Have them read a second story and share their answers in a short response to the class.
 - B. Watch one of the films created from Mrs. Aldrich's works. Compare and contrast the film version and the written document with a two-page summary (A Mother's Gift based on A LANTERN IN HER HAND; The Gift of Love from the Christmas story, "The Silent Stars Goes By"; and Cheers for Miss Bishop from MISS BISHOP (not included in the trunk but available for loan from the Aldrich Foundation.)
 - C. Go to the Aldrich website at bessstreeteraldrich.org and click on "Book Club Materials." Answer the questions for A LANTERN IN HER HAND. There are book club materials developed by Aldrich Enthusiast Gretchen Garrison to go along with several other books.
 - D. Turn to Chapter 14 in A LANTERN IN HER HAND and read about how Abbie and Will Deal created a nice Christmas for their children in spite a year of environmental catastrophes: blizzards, drought, grasshoppers, prairie fires etc. Create a homemade ornament or gift that is time period appropriate.
 - E. Create a panel of students whose task to inform their audience by addressing literature questions that go beyond factual information about Mrs. Aldrich or her works. Questions can include but are not limited to these: 1) Who are Mrs. Aldrich's contemporaries? Compare and contrast two other authors with Mrs. Aldrich. 2) Her main character in A LANTERN IN HER HAND is a woman. Is that significant, why or why not? 3) Did you believe Mrs. Aldrich used her life experience in the creation of her fiction? Can you site examples? 4 and 5) Create two more questions to pose to panel members that require presenters to predict, analyze, rewrite, role play, articulate, relate, prioritize, illustrate, break down, or critique. For instance, how would Abbie's life be different if she had chosen to marry Ed Matthews instead of Will Deal?