

Past Tracker Project
Illinois History Primary Documents and Lesson Plans

Discussion Questions
Children and Family

Apprentice Indenture, Fayette County, 1860

1. Who was in charge of Alfred Lumsden?
2. Who will become in charge of Alfred Lumsden?
3. What are the duties of James F. Wilkins? How are they similar or different from the duties of a father? How do you think Alfred and Mr. Wilkin's relationship might have been similar or different from a father/son relationship?
4. When will Alfred be released from his apprenticeship? What will he receive upon its completion? What might his options have been upon his release? What do you think might have become of Alfred upon his release?

Mother Jones and Illinois Children, 1916

1. This document mentions girls' wages. How much were these girls being paid per hour? What would be their daily wage in today's terms? Use an inflation calculator to find out. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has one available at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>. What would be their hourly wage in today's terms?
2. Was the boss violating the law with these hours or wages? How do you know (or not know)? Refer to "An Act to regulate the employment of children in the state of Illinois..., 1897" to learn about the existing Illinois laws. (No national law was in effect at this time.)