

**Exploring Rural Kentucky Through Documentary Art:
Irvin Store, 1920s - Documentary Art Interactive
Unit 2 - Lesson Set 1 - Saturday Social Life
- For the Student -**

BACKGROUND READING

Today's teens have a wide array of ways to interact with their friends. They can talk at school, text, use social media, drive to each other's homes, or meet at a restaurant or movie theater.

In the 1920s, the possibilities to talk to a boyfriend or girlfriend were limited. By the time they were old enough to date, many teens had dropped out of school. Any vehicle a family owned, whether a wagon or a truck, was likely needed on the farm or for the family business. And of course, there was no World Wide Web – or even telephones!

In Creelsboro in the early 20th century, teens might be able to go out together in a boat. If teens went to the same church, they might meet there. But the most common place to meet with friends was in Creelsboro on a Saturday afternoon, when almost everyone came to town to shop and socialize. If there was a dance in town that evening, Saturday was even more exciting!



Social life on a fall Saturday in Creelsboro – a detail from Irvin Store, 1920s by Dennis Thrasher. (2018).



Along the Cumberland River near Creelsboro in the early 20th century, teens could socialize as they searched for pearl-bearing freshwater mussels. Credit: The Marson Family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After examining the vignette, consider these questions:

1. What is happening in this vignette? What do you see that makes you think that?
2. What else do you see?
3. After watching the short video [Rural Life](#), does knowing more about the context of the painting help you notice details you had not noticed before? What kinds of details?
4. Speculate about the characters in this part of the painting. What is their relationship to one another? What are they discussing? Are either related to the farmer with the pumpkins?
5. Imagine the exchange between the characters in the painting. What happened before and after the moment captured in the painting? What happened that morning and what will happen that evening?