

# The Children's Blizzard of 1888

## *Teacher Resource Packet*

Presented by **Rayma Volkmer**  
Indian Creek Historical Fashions  
*Where History Comes to Life*

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The *Children's Blizzard of 1888* program is an **immersive living history experience** that brings one of the most devastating winter storms in Great Plains history to life.

Through **powerful storytelling, authentic historical context, and a custom storm soundscape**, students experience the sudden arrival of the blizzard and the life-and-death decisions faced by children, teachers, and families.

This program is designed to move beyond traditional learning by engaging students **emotionally, visually, and intellectually**.

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the historical significance of the Children's Blizzard of 1888
  - Examine how weather impacted daily life on the Great Plains
  - Analyze decision-making in high-risk situations
  - Explore the experiences of children and teachers during the storm
  - Develop empathy through immersive historical storytelling
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## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This program supports:

- U.S. History
- Great Plains / Regional History

- Weather & Environmental Science
  - Social Studies Standards
  - Critical Thinking & Decision-Making Skills
  - Language Arts (listening, writing, reflection)
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## **PRE-PROGRAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Use these to prepare students:

- What would you do if a storm suddenly hit without warning?
  - How do we receive weather warnings today?
  - What challenges did children face in early rural schools?
  - What would it feel like to be responsible for others in a dangerous situation?
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## **KEY VOCABULARY**

- Blizzard
  - Whiteout
  - Exposure
  - Homesteader
  - Prairie
  - Frontier
  - Survival
  - Isolation
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## **WHAT STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE**

During the program, students will:

- Witness the sudden shift from calm to chaos
- Experience the rising intensity of the storm through sound and storytelling
- Explore real-life decisions made by teachers and families
- Feel the emotional weight of survival and loss

This is not passive learning—

**Students become part of the moment.**

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## **POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**



### **Writing Prompt**

“Describe what it felt like when the storm hit. What would you have done?”

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### **Discussion Questions**

- What decisions were the most difficult?
  - What would you have done differently?
  - How did the lack of communication impact survival?
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### **Creative Activity**

Have students:

- Write a diary entry from a child or teacher
  - Create a short dramatic retelling
  - Illustrate the storm as they imagined it
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## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

- Map where the storm occurred across the Great Plains
  - Compare 1888 weather forecasting to today
  - Research a real survivor story
  - Discuss how geography impacted the storm’s severity
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## **EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**

This program helps students understand:

- The vulnerability of life on the frontier
- The strength and courage of ordinary people
- The reality that history is made up of human stories

**History becomes something they feel—not just something they learn.**

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## GRANT FUNDING INFORMATION

### Funding May Be Available

This program may qualify for funding through Humanities Nebraska.

As a **Humanities Nebraska Scholar**, Rayma Volkmer provides programming that meets the standards for humanities-based educational experiences.

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### How to Apply for Funding:

1. Visit Humanities Nebraska
  2. Review available grant opportunities
  3. Submit an application
  4. Schedule your program upon approval
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### Note for Educators

Many schools, libraries, and organizations successfully use grant funding to bring high-quality educational programs to their students.

Assistance and supporting documentation available upon request

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## BOOKING INFORMATION

Programs are available for:

- School Assemblies
- Classroom Presentations
- Homeschool Groups
- Library Educational Programs

Serving Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and surrounding regions.

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## CONTACT

### **Indian Creek Historical Fashions**

*Where History Comes to Life*

- 👉 Contact to schedule your program
- 👉 Ask about curriculum support and grant funding

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