

# Activity 5



## FIRST YEAR ON THE HOMESTEAD

### STUDY QUESTION:

Would some student find my diary interesting 100 years from today? How would things change?

### THE ACTIVITY:

Students remember and record their first year on the homestead.

### CURRICULUM FIT:

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

- Topic B - Alberta: Its People in History.
- Major factors that influenced settlement included transportation and natural resources.



#### MAJOR CONCEPTS

- Development, growth, change, resourcefulness, lifestyle.

#### LESSON CONCEPT

- The development of Alberta was the combination of human desire for change, political readiness and demand. Settlers provided the human resources to implement the Government of Canada's plans for development of the West.

### AGRICULTURE CONCEPTS:

Production, Processing and Marketing Systems  
Capital and Technology: Intensive Nature of the Industry

### PURPOSE:

- To improve planning skills.
- To experience some aspects of the early Alberta settlement.
- To develop decision-making skills.
- To share experiences and feelings with the settlers who chose to move onto the homesteads in Alberta.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED:

Art supplies, clay, sticks.  
Miscellaneous supplies which may be collected as required. (Example: moss.)

### TIME REQUIRED:

1 - 4 class periods.

# BACKGROUND - For the Teacher

Resource material in Activities 3 and 4 is useful for this lesson. If your class has done Activities 3 or 4, they will not need much introduction to this lesson.

## PROCEDURE

### Part 1

#### Introduction

1. Discuss the various places pioneers settled.
2. Introduce the worksheet "My First Home".  
Pioneers made homes from materials that were at hand.

Prairie farmers often lived in sod huts for the first year.

Parkland or forest homesteaders often made log cabins.

Some pioneers used tents or simple board shacks.

### Part 2

#### Recording

#### Information

3. Divide the class into groups which represent pioneer families.
4. Have groups do the worksheet "My First Home".
5. Discuss the information on the worksheet.
6. Have the groups do the worksheet "Life on the Homestead".

### Part 3

#### Conclusion

7. Ask each group to write a short story about their first winter on the homestead. Include comments from all members of the group/family.
8. Share the stories with the class.

## FOR DISCUSSION

1. From doing these exercises, what have you learned about lifestyles 100 years ago in Alberta?
2. How have farm families changed?
3. What things are found in our kitchens today that pioneers would not know how to operate?
4. What did pioneers use instead of electricity and natural gas?
5. At an average of 30 kilometres a day, how long would it take you to travel from your school to Calgary in 1883 to meet the train?
6. What were some of the things you might do during your days if you were a child in 1901? Do you think you might have attended school?

## RELATED ACTIVITIES

To get a real feel for some of the labours of the pioneer family, students may try some of the following:

1. Find a tree that the town or an individual wants removed and see if the class can dig it up, roots and all, using hand tools.
2. Dig out sod for a garden plot. Figure out how long it would take to cultivate 1 acre at the rate that they can do this chore.
3. Take a walk in a wilderness area and identify as many edible items as possible.
4. Have a wood chopping competition.
5. Make a model of a pioneer home.
6. Using the maps of your land in Activity 4, explain to the class how your family developed their farm.
7. Make some biscuits and/or other pioneer food to share with the class.
8. Preserve some fruit by drying or canning.





# Worksheet

## My First Home

1. What building materials did you use?

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2. Who built it?

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3. How big was it?

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4. What kind of furniture did you have?

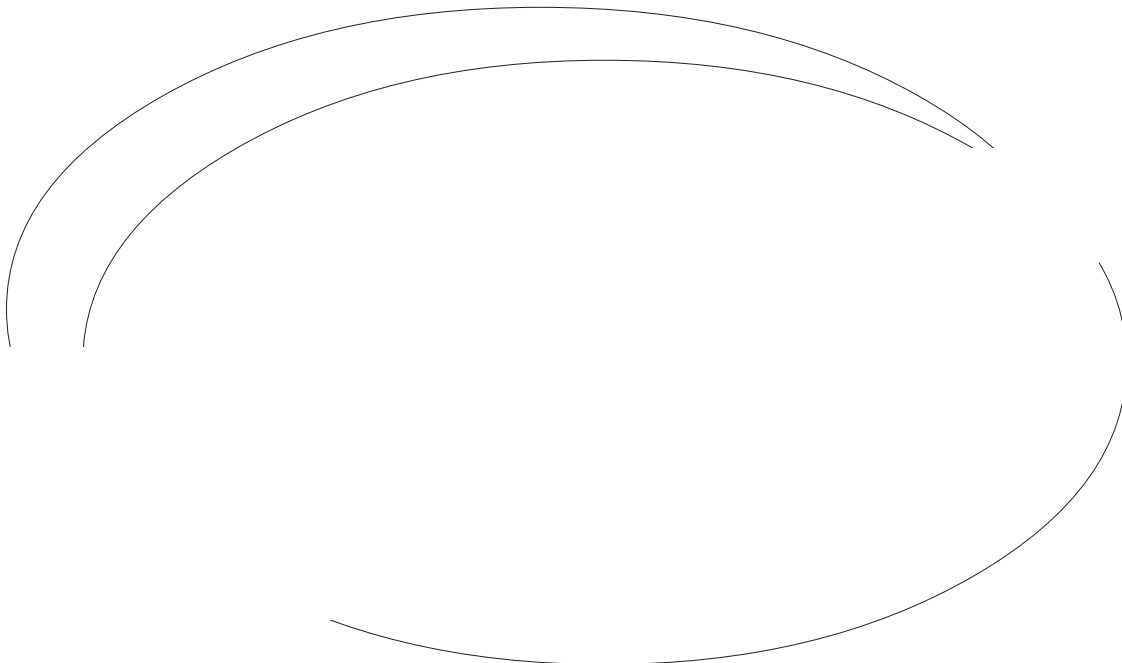
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5. Was your home comfortable?

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6. Draw a picture of your first home.



# Worksheet



## Life on the Homestead

1. Can you name a piece of early machinery you may have used on the homestead?

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2. Did you have a horse or an ox to help with the work?

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3. What was some of the food you ate?

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4. Where did your food come from?

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5. Where did you go shopping?

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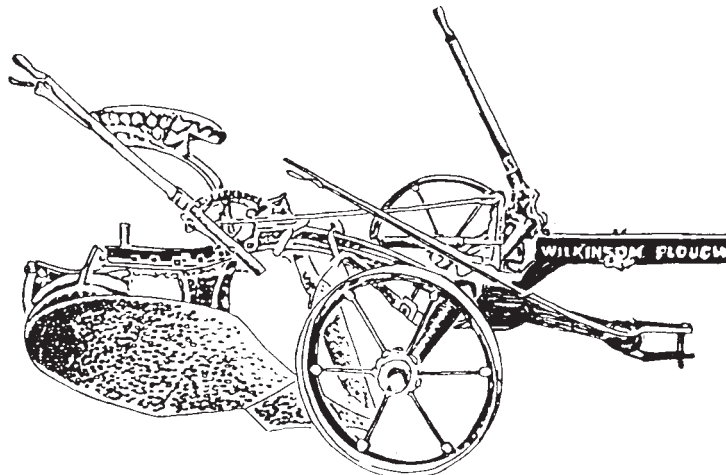
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6. How did you travel from place to place?

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## *Homesteaders*

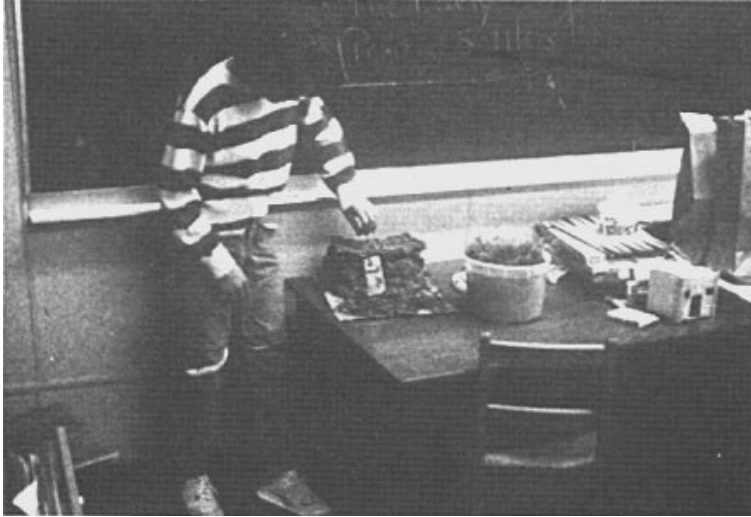
*Pushing the frontiers further  
Back with relentless hands,  
Blazing the trail with a plowshare,  
Far in the hinterlands;  
Holding fast to their birthright,  
Born to the realm of toil;  
Bearded, grim and unconquered,  
Ragged kings of the soil.*

*Building their lonely cabins,  
Staking their homestead claim;  
Beating the trail to Somewhere,  
Steady, fearless and game,  
Bounded by sky and muskeg,  
Hedged by the vast unknown,  
Earning their hundred and sixty,  
Winning their fight alone.*

*Theirs is the dream eternal,  
Hills that are rugged and green;  
Lure of the far horizon,  
Prairies, wind-swept and clean.  
Visioning towns in the making,  
Faith in the untried lands,  
Holding the country's future,  
Safe in their calloused hands.*

*Beside Still Waters  
- Edna Jaques*

## Sod Houses



The students model.

Hines Creek student displays a model of sod hut.



The settlers model.

Sod House.  
"The beginning of  
better things."

Buffalo bones in  
front - 1904.

**E. Brown Collection, B723,  
Provincial Archives of  
Alberta.**



Cooperation makes  
a hard job easier.

Barn Raising Bee.  
Redwater District  
1930 A2216.

**Provincial Archives  
of Alberta.**



Stooks in front  
of an old barn at  
Fort Edmonton Park.

Al Kosmak.



## Some Homesteaders Found Work in the Towns

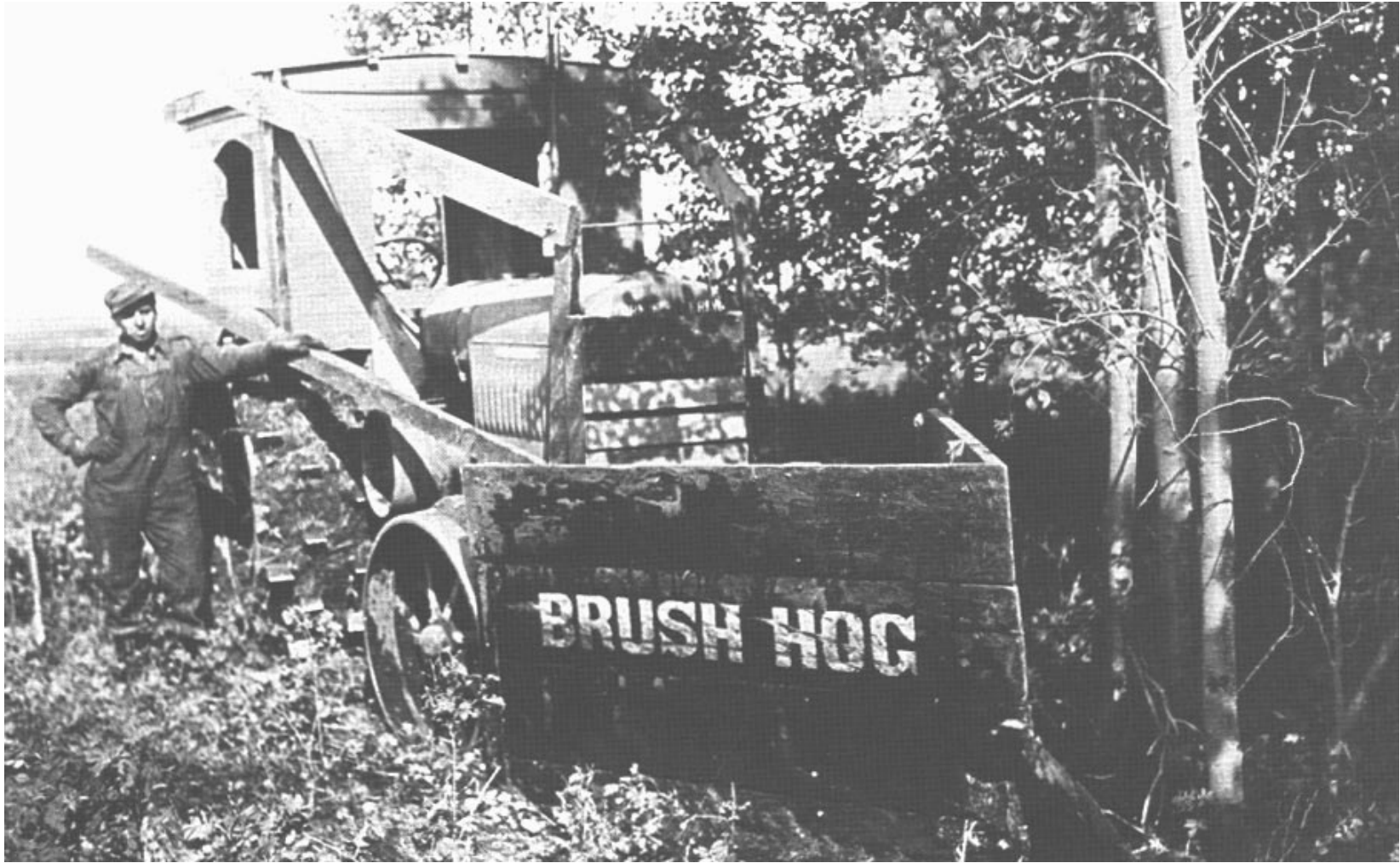
Steam ditcher at work, 1907. E. Brown Collection B1316.



## Travel in the Summer Season Could be Pleasant

The Fort Saskatchewan Trail, 1891 - 1904. E. Brown Collection B716.  
Provincial Archives of Alberta.





**Machines Were Invented to Help with the Work**

"Brush Hog" McCormick-Deering, Stettler, Alberta A7753.

Provincial Archives of Alberta.