



## Curriculum

# Homesteads

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### Goal

Students will explore the concept of homesteading in Jackson Hole.

### Outcomes

- Students will understand a simple history of homesteading in the United States.
- Students will discuss basic human needs and how homesteaders met those needs.
- Students will explore homesteaders' lives in early Jackson Hole through old photographs and artifacts.
- Students will spend time in the Jackson Hole Museum (or Historical Society) to collect information on homesteading in Jackson Hole through observation and reading.
- Students will participate in an activity or activities to present their information in the form of drawings, maps and / or oral presentations.
- Students will use skills including listening, speaking, observing, drawing, writing, researching information and using imagination and creativity.

### Resources

**The following resources are available for use at the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.**

#### **Children's Books**

*For You Know that Wyoming will be Your New Home*, Harriet Otto, Researcher. This 28-page book, published by the Wyoming State Museum Volunteers, Inc. is a compilation of 26 excerpts about children's lives in the early days of Wyoming from the Wyoming Archives collection of photographs and interviews done during the 1930s. Topics include stories about school, helping with chores, things children did to have fun. It is out of print and can be found in the Teton County Library.

**Adult books**

*and that's the Way it was in Jackson's Hole* by Jack Huyler. Stories of people and events in the valley from 1926–1999.

*The Early Days in Jackson Hole* by Virginia Huidekoper. A selection of old photographs of the valley arranged by topics including photos by William Henry Jackson, the elk, settlers, communities, contending with nature, dudes, and early sportsmen.

*Homesteading with the Elk: A Story of Frontier Life in Jackson Hole, Wyoming* by Bertha Chambers Gillette

*This Was Jackson's Hole: Incidents and Profiles from the Settlement of Jackson Hole* by Fern Nelson

**Vertical Files**

These files include a wealth of newspaper and magazine articles and other information on Jackson Hole history. Topics include cattle and dude ranching, farming, early settlements, schools, rodeo, cowboys, clothing and numerous others.

**Photograph Collection**

This collection of over 15,000 cataloged images of early days in Jackson Hole documents communities, cattle and dude ranching, climbing, skiing, the elk herd, life in Jackson Hole, and more.

**Artifact Collections**

The museum has numerous items from the early days of Jackson Hole including spurs, saddles, cattle ranching gear, children's games and toys, dude ranch furniture, old newspaper printing equipment, blacksmith tools, gold mining artifacts, and many others.

## Activity #1

# Homesteads

### Approximate Time For Activity

- One hour

### Materials Supplied by Museum

- Historic photos showing various aspects of life.

### Materials Supplied by Teacher

- Paper for sketching
- Pencils
- Crayons

### Assistants Needed

- None

## CLASSROOM INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

### Introducing the Project

1. Explain the Homestead Project to your students.
2. They will be starting their projects today, gathering more information at the Museum or Historical Society and finishing them in a later class period.

## Homesteading in America

At the end of the eighteenth century, a young United States of America stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River and from Canada (excluding northern Maine) to Florida (which was still owned by Spain). Then, in 1803, with the Louisiana Purchase, our country began to expand and grow. With a final purchase of land from Mexico fifty years later the continental US was complete. Lewis and Clark learned much about these new lands during their expedition (1804 – 1806) and fur trappers further explored and opened the west. With the Homestead Act of 1862, lands were opened for westward expansion. Under this act anyone could own 160 acres outside of the 13 original colonies by filing an application, improving the land and then filing for a deed of title. Over the next five years homesteaders were required to “prove up” their land by building cabins and outbuildings and raising crops or livestock. Once a homesteader improved the land they could file for the deed of title. Homesteading ended throughout America in 1976 except for Alaska where it continued until 1986.

## Homesteading in Jackson Hole

The first to homestead in Jackson Hole were John Holland and John Carnes; two trappers who, in 1884, decided that it was time to settle down and try their hand at farming. Carnes was married to an American Indian woman named Millie, but Holland was a life long bachelor. They both homesteaded on what is now the National Elk Refuge and were soon followed by the Nelsons, Wilsons, Simpsons and others. The land in Jackson Hole was not easy to farm or ranch and many homesteaders

found that the 160 acres they could claim was not enough to support themselves. At times wives filed their own claims next to their husband's so the family's land would be doubled. As families arrived and homesteaded in the valley small communities began appearing. The Wilson family founded the town of Wilson, Mormon families from Utah gathered at the base of Blacktail Butte and founded the town of Grovont (Mormon Row), Kelly grew around the bridge over the Gros Ventre as Moose grew near Menor's Ferry and Moran and Elk sprang up at the northern end of the valley. Jackson, the largest community in the valley, was incorporated in 1914, then became county seat in 1923 and throughout its existence has been the center of activity for this valley.

These communities were vital to the homesteaders that lived around them as they provided for the needs of the homesteaders. Basic needs of clothing and food and other needs such as education, socialization and entertainment were met through schools, churches and community gatherings. Post offices provided a link to the world outside Jackson Hole and the larger communities offered shops.

### **Needs Power Point**

There is an optional worksheet for students that corresponds with the power point.

1. What are a person's basic needs to survive? Write student responses on the board.
  - Food
  - Water
  - Clothing
  - Shelter
  
2. What other needs do people have?
  - Other people: family and community.
  - Work or a way to make a living.
  - Education
  - Transportation
  - Entertainment

- For all of these needs compare and contrast the past and present and have students share examples from their own lives.

### **Life on a Homestead**

1. Explain to students about homesteading and specifically homesteading in Jackson Hole.
2. Explore the life of a homesteader.
  - Lay out old photos of homesteads and life during the homesteading period in Jackson Hole.
  - Give students time to look at them to learn as much as they can about life as a homesteader.
  - Conversation with students: Imagine you are the first family to move here. You came by covered wagon and horseback through the Hoback Canyon or over the Pass. When you arrive, you camp along the Gros Ventre River and travel through the valley looking for the perfect place to settle and make your new home. You can live anywhere you want. Your family will farm or ranch so you can grow your own food. You can hunt for meat and raise cattle and other livestock. There is no one to buy things from and no one to sell things to. Think about what you need and what you want.
3. As a group discuss: What things make land good for homesteading? Have students take notes or sketch ideas for their homesteads. Later they will make a large map of their homestead.
  - Water – river, creek, spring or well
  - Flat land – easier plowing, growing and building
  - A place where snow is not too deep
  - Shelter from the wind – trees, bushes or hills
  - Good soil – few rocks, porous, deep, fertile
4. Give students time to sketch their homestead land including these important elements. They should label what each thing is so that they will remember their plan.

**Approximate Time for Activity**

- One hour

**Materials Supplied by Museum**

- Museum Detective Sheet (master sheet in this unit)

**Materials Supplied by Teacher**

- Paper or sketch pads for student sketching and writing
- pencils

**Assistants Needed**

- one preferred, not required

**MUSEUM VISIT****Museum Detectives**

1. Tell students that today they are going to be museum detectives.
  - Each student will receive a sheet that asks them to find certain items and then sketch and describe them.
  - Students can work with a partner or on their own and will have only thirty minutes to complete the sheet.

- The information they collect will be used to create their land map. This map will include the geography of the land (streams, trees, hills, other) and a layout of their ranch or farm. They will also draw an outside view of the front of their cabin and a floor plan of the cabin. If they choose, they can draw some furniture that they will make for their cabin.
- They need to make good sketches and notes on what they find in the museum that will help them plan their ranch or farm.
- Students that finish early can spend the rest of the time looking at museum displays.

2. Hand out the Museum Detective Sheets and set students to work.
3. When time is up, call the group back together and have a brief sharing time for students to tell about some of the interesting things they found and to ask any questions.

**Closing**

1. Have students share some of the ideas they have for their homesteads.
2. Thank students for their good work.

**Approximate Time For Activity**

- Varies

**Materials Supplied by Teacher:**

- Large paper for drawings of homesteads.
- Small paper for planning
- Pencils
- Colored pencils/ crayons
- Examples of maps, floor plans, other useful visual aids

**Assistants Needed**

- None

**POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

NOTE: This project could also be done as a small group project with each group being responsible for creating a different part of the homestead plan. If you choose this option, have an initial discussion with the whole class to agree on a basic plan including land forms, buildings they want to have and size and type of house. A third option would be to create a homestead using three dimensional models for buildings, equipment and other elements.

**Field Trip**

1. If possible, before beginning the homestead project, take the class to a log cabin or house. In advance, ask the owners if you can take your students close to the house to see how the logs are put together, how the logs are chinked, what the roof looks like and how any porches are designed.
2. Explain to students about notching, chinking and other techniques in building a log cabin.
3. Mormon Row has several different style homes and barns for students to study. These were all homesteads at the turn of the last century.
4. On the way back, talk about the design and building materials of other more modern houses you see.

**The Homestead Project**

1. Explain the project to students. Suggestion: make a poster or a handout with the steps students will do. Divide the project up into sections and provide work time for students to finish each section. Explain that they will have several opportunities to work on the project sections.

## 2. Directions

- Use your sketches of the geography of your land that you made during the first class period and the notes and sketches that you made during the visit to the museum.
- Create a map of your homestead.
- Caution students to draw their elements first lightly with pencil, so they can make any changes necessary.
- Remind students that they must live on their homestead through very cold winters and deep snows. If they plan to raise animals such as cattle, horses, chickens, pigs or sheep, they need to think about any special shelters they might need for the animals in winter.

### **Creating Your Homestead**

Before students begin the project, have a conversation with them about the viewpoint from which they will draw their homestead.

1. Draw the geography of the land: streams, hills, flat land, forests (aspen, pine, and cottonwood), ponds, rocky places, sagebrush, and meadows. Use colored pencils and color each section lightly so that you can draw the buildings on top of the land forms. Use different colors to show what kind of plants are growing in the area and for hills, streams and rocky places.
2. Make a legend that shows what colors represent each land form or plant type.
3. Think about the buildings you will need. This will depend on what you plan to do on your homestead. Draw the homestead buildings on your map. Label each building. Think about what kinds of building materials that are available in the valley. Think about how you will move the materials from where you find them to the place where you will build your house and other buildings.

### **Additional Project Ideas**

1. Draw a picture of the front view of your cabin showing how the building will look.
2. Draw a floor plan of your cabin.

3. Make a display of students' land maps and invite other classes and / or parents to visit the display. Students could make brief presentations to their guests telling how they created their homestead idea or to explain why they choose their land forms.
4. Write a letter to your friends in the place you left describing your new homestead and telling them a little about your new life.
5. Invite an old-timer to visit the students and talk about homesteading. The Historical Society staff can provide you with a list of speakers.
6. Take a field trip to Menor's Ferry in Grand Teton National Park to see original homestead cabins with furnishings and ferry replica. Usually open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Check with park headquarters for dates or to see if they do special tours before opening date or after closing date.