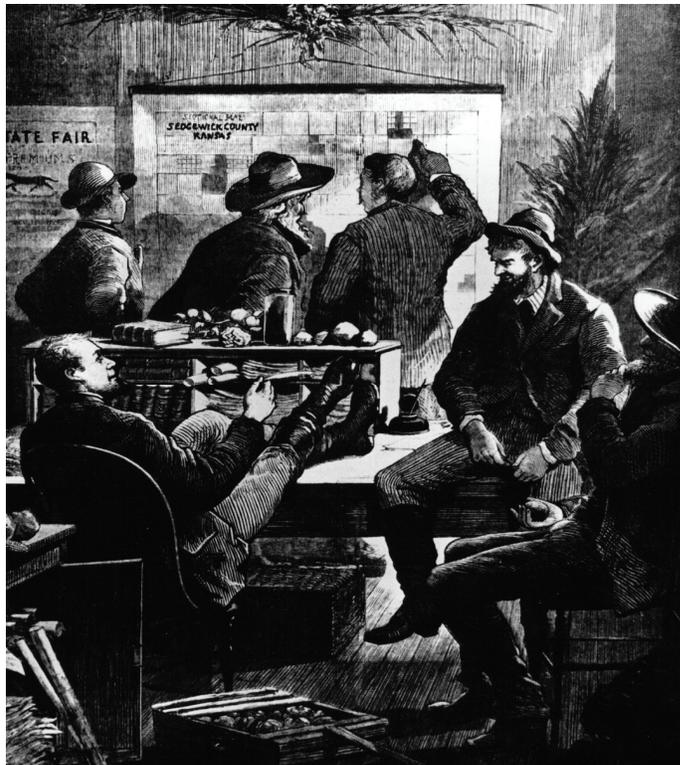


HOMESTEAD HISTORY



Unit Two

Homestead History

Unit Two



The following is background information for creating lesson plans. Activities start on page 23.

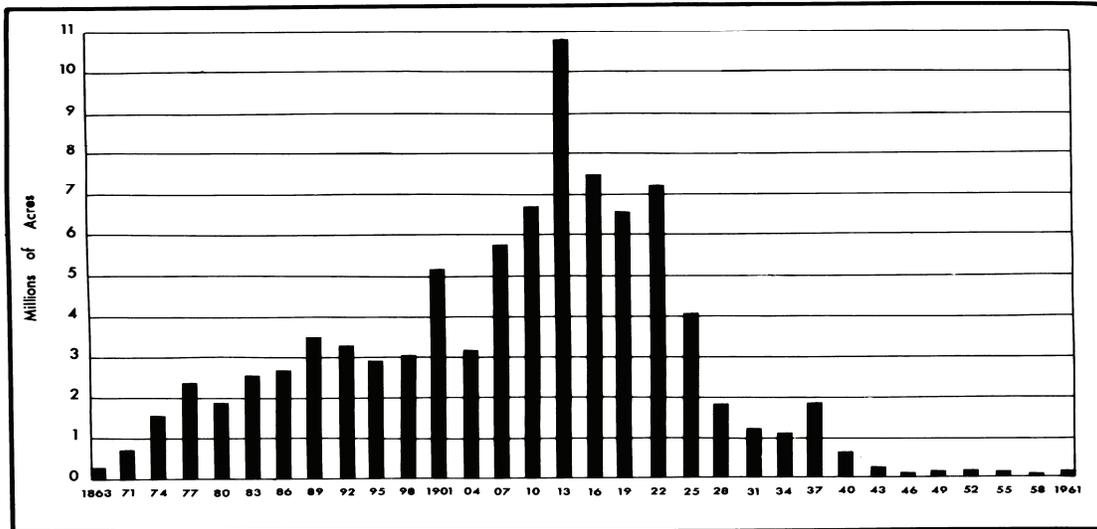
Homestead History

The cry went out in 1862, "Free Land for all who want it!" From the late 1800's through 1934, people came from the eastern United States and Europe to the Great Plains to start new lives staking their hopes and dreams on a claim for land. What they found was an ancient landscape of deep prairie grasses and unpredictable rain fall. The free land they claimed came at a high cost not just to themselves, but to the native people already living in the vast sea of grass. The native prairie itself was dramatically obliterated. Whole ways of life changed, some for better and some for worse, but always at a high "cost."

Why "Free Land"

In 1803, with the acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase and additional lands, the United States doubled in size leaving the government with ownership of millions of *acres* of land. When people moved west to settle these areas, they bypassed the interior, the *AGreat American Desert@* as they called it, and continued to the coastal areas where they expected to acquire rich land for farming. Much of the prairie land east of the Missouri River had been claimed under the Pre-Emption Act of 1841. This act allowed settlers to purchase 160-acres of land from the government for \$1.25 an acre.

FINAL HOMESTEAD ENTRIES



Starting as early as 1824, the idea of giving land away had a voice in Congress. Soon citizens began to express, "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm." The idea of free land for the common person began. The vast interior was largely unsettled at least in the eyes of the government. American Indians, who were considered nomadic, were seen as not utilizing the land. The United States government wanted to see citizens settled in the interior territories to increase the wealth of the

Nation. As Andrew Johnson, a Tennessee Senator, stated ". . . take one of these men, transplant him in the west upon 160 acres of fat, virgin soil, and in a few years . . . you increase his ability to buy a great deal."

As the Civil War loomed closer many other factors pushed the government into offering free land. The conflict over land increased between the South and North with such laws as the Missouri Compromise and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The South wanted to give the new territories and states the option of becoming slave areas; while the North wanted free states. The South, afraid of losing its voting power in Congress, did not want the new areas to be anti-slavery and opposed every new act that would give land away. As Galusha Grow, the father of the Homestead Act, stated ". . . why should not the legislation of the country be so changed as to prevent for the future the evils of land monopoly, by setting apart the vast and unoccupied territories of the Union and consecrating them forever in free homes for free men."

The coming of the Civil War assured passage of the Homestead Act. With the secession of the Southern states there were few left in Congress to oppose the idea. On May 20, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Homestead Act, and became the champion of the free land idea.

GLOSSARY

Acre - a measure of land, 160 square rods or 4,840 square yards

Claimant - a person claiming right or title to a piece of land

Homestead claim - a piece of land granted to an individual under the Homestead Act of 1862

Homesteader - an individual who claimed a piece of land under the Homestead Act of 1862

Locator - a person who assisted others in finding a piece of land to homestead

Patent and title - an official document transferring a piece of land from one individual to another, or from the government to an individual

Proving Up - a way to establish that an individual had met the conditions of the Homestead Act of 1862

The Homestead Act of 1862

The Homestead Act of 1862, gave 160-acres of land away to individuals who met certain requirements. In order to file a claim, an individual had to be at least 21 years of age and be the head of household. This vagueness in the wording allowed women to file claims and own land. The act also required a person to be a citizen of the United States or declare intention to gain citizenship. This allowed many European immigrants to stake claims as well. Many railroads and western towns sent representatives to European countries to entice people to move to the United States. These representatives showed pictures of beautiful towns with tree-lined streets and rich soil for farming. The applicant of a claim had to file an affidavit with the local land office stating they met the conditions required by the law. At this time, the *claimant* would pay a fee of \$12 for filing the paperwork.

Once the filing was complete, there were additional requirements to meet in order to receive the *patent* and *title* to the land. A person had to build a home, live on the land, make the land his/her permanent residence, and work the land for a period of 5 years.

Many people who came to claim land paid for the services of a *locator*. This person would assist them in finding an unclaimed tract of land. Many locators showed individuals land near their own claim in order to "settle" the country and have neighbors nearby.

After living on the land, building a home, and farming the land for 5 years, it was time to "*prove up*." This simply required the *homesteader* to find two individuals who would serve as witnesses. These witnesses had to state they had known the homesteader for 5 years, knew the claimant had built a home on the land, and knew the claimant had tilled and worked so many acres of land for crops. With witnesses in tow, a claimant would proceed to the land office to "prove up," paying another small filing fee of \$6 and having both witnesses sign the final documents. Afterwards, the claimant would receive a final certificate or patent to the land, having met all the conditions.

Homestead History at the Park

In the wee hours of the morning, on January 1, 1863, Daniel Freeman filed his *homestead claim* at the Brownsville Land Office on the Missouri River. His claim is considered to be one of the first homestead claims filed under the Homestead Act of 1862. On the same day, thirty people in eleven states/territories filed claims, many of them in the early hours of the morning. On September 1, 1869, Daniel Freeman received the patent to his land, making him one of the first patent recipients.

Application } Homestead
No 1. } Land Office
Brownville, N.D. January 1st 1863

I Daniel Freeman of Gage County Nebraska Territory do hereby apply to enter under the provisions of the act of Congress approved May 20th 1862 entitled an act to secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the Public Domain the south half of N.W. 1/4 Sec. 10 T. 14 N. R. 10 E. containing 160 acres in Township 14th N. Range 10th E. containing 160 acres Having filed my Declaration before on the 1st day of September 1862
Daniel Freeman

Land office at

Brownville, N.D. January 1st 1863
I Richard T. Barrett, Register of the Land Office do hereby certify that the above application is for unoccupied lands of the class which the applicant is legally entitled to enter under the Homestead act of May 20th 1862 and that there is no prior valid adverse right to the same

Richard T. Barrett,
Register

Unit 2, Activity 1

Homestead History, Why "Free Land"

Theme:

The U.S. government gave away 270 million acres of land in the West in order to get people to settle in this area. To do this, they came up with the idea of giving land away for "free."

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to state one reason why the government came up with the idea of "free land."

Materials Needed:

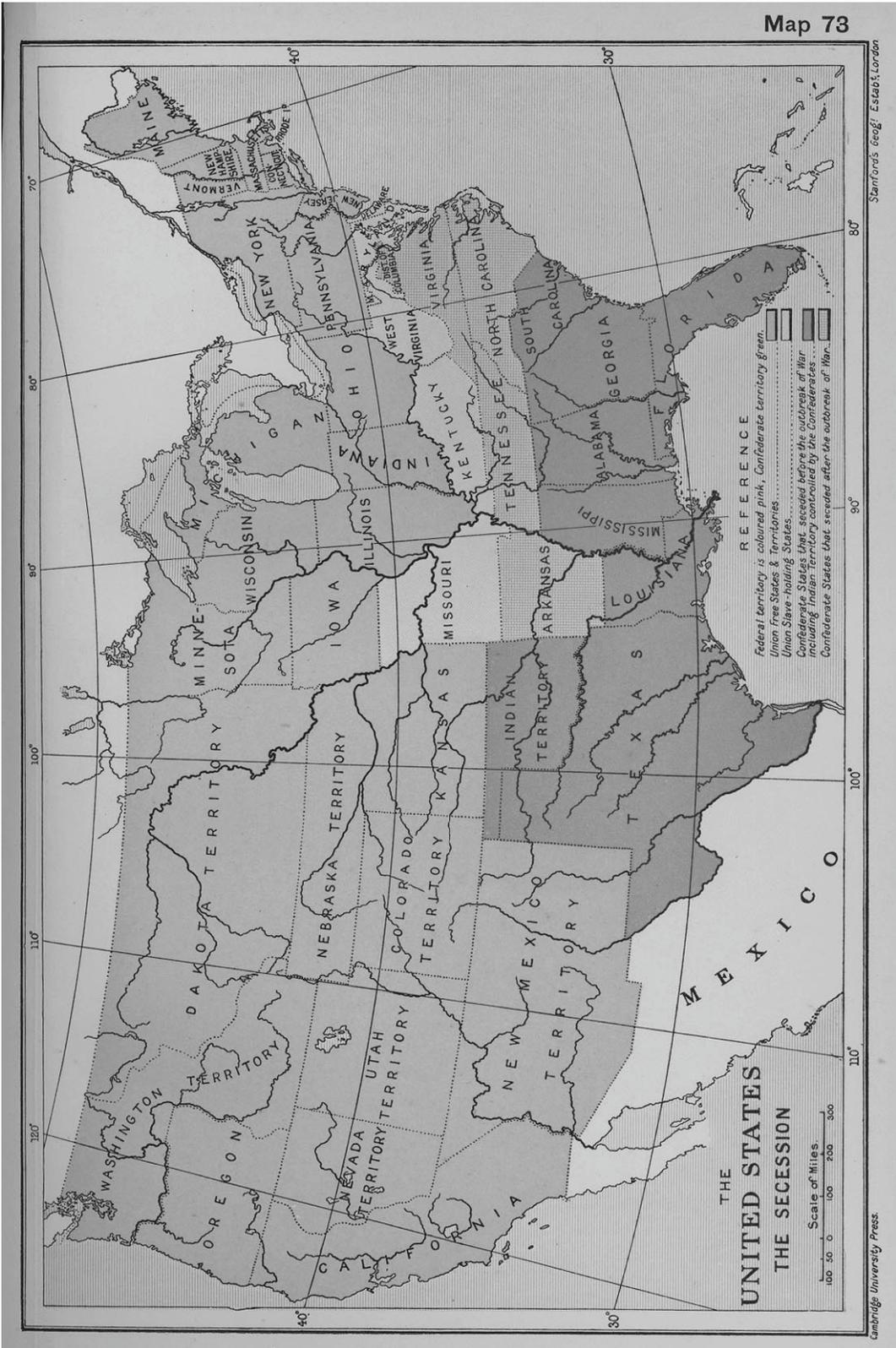
Map: U.S. in 1860, individual maps for students, coloring pencils

Subject: social studies, geography

Skills: mapping, critical thinking

Methods: Through a mapping activity, students will be able to see that in 1860 most of the land west of the Missouri River was not owned by U.S. citizens.

1. Show a map of the U.S. in 1860 and explain the location of where U.S. citizens lived. Be sure to show students that U.S. citizens lived on the west coast (Oregon, California, and Washington) and east of the Missouri River.
 2. Explain that in 1803 President Thomas Jefferson bought the middle section of the U.S. from the country of France. This was called the Louisiana Purchase. Ask students if they remember what this area was called by early explorers: "The Great American Desert."
 3. Break students into groups. Hand out maps. Have students draw the following on the map (remind students to make a key): Missouri River, Mississippi River, Oregon & California Trails
 4. Have students color in the Great American Desert and the areas where very few U.S. citizens lived (mainly the Great Plains and the Western U.S.).
 5. Gather students into a large group and talk about what they discovered through the mapping activity.
 6. Explain that by the time Abraham Lincoln was President, the government wanted to see people live in these unpopulated areas. The government did not feel that the American Indians were improving the land.
 7. Ask students the question, how does a government get people to move to an area where few people live? Lead students to the concept of "free land."
 8. Explain about the Homestead Act of 1862. This was the act that gave people 160 acres of free land to entice them to move west. The students will be learning more about this in later activities.
- An Exploring Experience:** Have students contact the local land office and see if they can get free land from the government today.



Map of U.S., 1860

Unit 2, Activity 2

Stake Your Claim

Theme:

Staking a claim and living on that claim was often challenging for homesteaders.

Objective:

1. Students will be able to decide on a homestead claim and give one reason why that flag was chosen.
2. Students will be able to name one thing a homesteader had to do in order to keep a claim and one disaster a homesteader had to overcome.

Materials: colored flags and matching wrist bands, disaster scenario cards

Subject: social studies, geography

Skills: critical thinking & brainstorming

Methods: At Homestead National Monument of America, students will experience staking a claim by hearing about the different types of claims, locating a claim, and explaining why they chose that claim.

1. Gather students together and explain they will be locating a homestead claim on the prairie. Each flag they see represents a homestead claim.
2. Explain that the different colors of the flags represent different types of land.

White = flat land
Green – hilly land

Blue = water and timber
Yellow = water but **no** timber
Red = no water and no timber

3. Split students into groups of twos or threes with no more teams than there are flags. Explain that in their groups they are going to decide which flag on the prairie they are going to choose for their homestead claim. Remind them that sometimes homesteaders would stake a claim at the land office without seeing the land prior to their arrival. They often didn't get what they wanted.

The groups will then need to line up to do a "land rush" like the Oklahoma land rush. (Remind them during the Oklahoma land rush if they were caught cheating they were shot on sight!) Review what the colors on the flags mean again.

4. The teams will run to the flags on your signal and take the wrist bands off of the flag they choose leaving the flag on the pole. Each team should have the same color wrist bands as the flag they choose. The teams should return to the starting line once they have secured their wrist bands.

5. After the teams have returned to the start line distribute the disaster cards, one for each team. Have each team review the cards reading them silently to themselves. After they have had the chance to review their cards each team will have the opportunity to read their card aloud to all the teams. The teams politely listening will then determine what disaster happened to the team of homesteaders.

6. After the disaster is determined ask the team that read their card: What kind of land they chose based on their wrist band colors? What kind of house did they build? Were they successful?

Two million claims were filed during the Homestead Act. Less than half were successful (40% or about 730,000 claims were successful.)

7. Have students decide whether to stay on their homestead claim or return east based on what their homestead claim proved and the disaster they encountered. Explain to the students that many people came out west to homestead, but not everyone stayed as some people returned east. (Teacher note: Relate this back to the disasters that homesteaders faced) Ask students if they would be willing to endure these hardships and stay on their claim; or would they want to return to the east.

Adapt to classroom use: Use colors to represent the different claims and have students complete the above activity in the classroom or playground.

An Exploring Experience: Have students research hardships in different environmental settings in other countries. Have students share their findings with the class.

“A mass of black clouds loomed up in the West, distant thunder boomed and lightning streaked the sky and cut through the landscape and then with a rush and roar came the hail, devastating everything. After the storm had passed, the Groves ranch was damaged thousands of dollars, the acres of feed beaten in to the ground, there was no pasture for the thousands of white faces.”

- Susan Proffitt, *Pioneer Women*

Answer: Hail

“...by ten o'clock everyone realized that the country was in the grip of a terrible blizzard, the wind blowing a gale and the snow coming in a blinding rush. By morning, nothing could be seen, and in order to care for the stock in the barns, it was necessary to draw a rope from house to barn. The cold was so intense that fires had to be kept going in the house day and night, and many people suffered from a lack of provisions and fuel. This continued for four days. Cattle on the range could not be cared for and it was not possible to search for them until after the fourth day of the storm. Losses were extremely heavy and searchers would find them frozen to death, some with their mouths frozen shut, some with their feet frozen.”

-Ary Johnson, *Pioneer Women*

Answer: Blizzards

One afternoon of this day, ...the hem of my dress caught on an axle-handle, precipitating me under the wheels both of which passed over me, badly crushing the left leg, before Father could stop the oxen. Seeing me clear of the wheels he picked me up and carrying me in his arms ran to stop the team, which had become unmanageable from fright. A glance at my limb dangling in the air as he ran revealed to him the extent of the injury I had received...”

-*Women's Diaries of a Westward Journey*

Answer: Accidents

“There was no sound but the roar of the wind, and the rattle of dust and sand on his cap. He shouted again, and then stopped with his back to the wind to listen, but there was no reply. He pulled his muffler back from his ears, and shouted once more. He thought he heard voices...just an instant...then the din of the wind drowned everything. He ran frantically back and forth, shouting and peering in every direction, through half closed eyes; but he heard no answering call, and he saw nothing but clouds of dust driven by the raging wind.”

-*Sod and Stubble*

Answer: Dust Storms

About two o'clock the storm struck. It was so dark we could not see through the windows. I opened the door as the children wanted to see out. There was only a mass of swirling snow. We put out our arms and could not see our hands. I sensed that we might have to stay at the schoolhouse all night so decided to get more coal. Getting a coal bucket and keeping close to the south side of the building I tried to reach the coal house which was attached to the schoolhouse. I reached out my hand, and felt coal, and then I realized the coal house was gone.”

- Mrs. B.H. Schaberg, *In All Its Fury, the Great Blizzard of 1888*

Answer: Blizzard

"I thought to save some of my garden by covering it with sacks, but the hoppers regarded that as a huge joke, and enjoyed the awning thus provided, or if they could not get under, they ate their way through... They had a neat way of eating onions. They devoured the tops, and then ate all of the onion from the inside, leaving the outer shell.

- Mary Lyon, *Pioneer Women*

Answer: Grasshoppers

"There were still a great many rattlesnakes about. She, herself, killed several in the yard and garden. And a few people in the neighborhood, mostly children were bitten. One little girl was bitten while picking wild currants, and she was later found down in the creek bed, bathing the wound in the mud. She had torn her clothes off in her agony, and died a few hours after she was found."

-*Sod and Stubble*

Answer: Dangers of Pioneering - rattlesnakes

"All went well for a time, but the rains ceased to come and the weather grew hot and all the vegetation dried up. Night after night we could see the lightning flash all around the horizon, but it was only heat and not the forerunner of rain. By and by, hope failed the stoutest heart and how we were to live the long cold winter through was a problem not easy to solve. Fifteen months without a drop of rain and the country new, no surplus corn and wheat in the bins as now, made the bravest heart despair."

-*Pioneer Women*

Answer: Drought

"The hungry insects had not only eaten the leaves of the corn, but they had eaten the pith out of the stubs, even down into the ground. As Rosie passed the garden she saw that every green plant was gone. Even the weeds had been stripped, and an old bonnet which had been left hanging on a post was eaten to shreds."

-*Sod and Stubble*

Answer: Grasshoppers

"In those days of endless sweep of prairies, when the tall grass became dry from premature drying from drought or early frost, it was a signal for close vigilance in watching the horizon all around for prairie fires. A light against the sky told of a prairie fire in that direction and great anxiety was felt if the wind happened to be in your direction. At times the fires would be such that the flames could be seen creeping up the hillsides, and would spread over great stretches of ground. The Saline River which almost surrounded our place was considered a security, but sometimes the gales of wind blowing masses of loose grass or weeds would cause the fire to "jump" the river."

- Agnes Barry, *Pioneer Women*

Answer: Prairie Fires

Unit 2, Activity 3

Filing a Claim

Theme:

In order to own land, filing a claim was an important first step for homesteaders.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the process of filing a homestead claim.

Materials Needed: Land Claim Forms, Land Ledger Sheet, Land Cards #1

Subject: social studies

Skills: writing

Methods: Students will learn how to file a claim under the Homestead Act through the process of a discovery "game."

1. Ask the students if they remember Abraham Lincoln. Explain that when he was president he passed a very important law that encouraged people to move. This bill was called the Homestead Act of 1862.
2. Explain to the students that as they pretend to be homesteaders, they will be filing a claim for land under this act. Read the narrative about filing a claim.

"When I lived back East, I heard there was free land out West, just ripe for the taking. As I didn't own any land, and worked long and hard as a blacksmith, I decided that this was my opportunity to make a new life for myself and my family. So I packed up, leaving my family behind and headed west. When I got to the Nebraska Territory, I found a nice piece of land with the help of a locator. I decided this is where I wanted to stake my claim. The land was flat and the soil was rich, just right for farming; but there were only two trees. I knew this was the place. I went to the nearest land office which was 40 miles away and filed my claim with the land agent there. Now, I understand that you newcomers here have found some land that you need to file on. Well, this is what you need to do. Go to the land agent and state your need to file a claim. Oh, and you'll need twelve dollars. That's not for the land, but for all the paperwork that filing creates, or at least that's what they say."

3. Hand out the land cards #1 to each student. As with most homesteaders, they had no idea what they would encounter while establishing a claim. This is the way it should be with students.
4. Explain to students that they have to come to you, the land agent to file their claim. They must read their land card to see what they have on their land. Some cards will tell students they need to wait before they go to the land office because they do not have enough money to file a claim.
5. Have students line up to fill out land claim forms. Pull out the Land Ledger sheet. You need to record each person's name and land section (card number) on the ledger after they have filled out a land claim form. But first, ask each student if:
 1. They are over 21 and head of their household?
 2. Are they U.S. citizens? If yes, where did they live before? If no, are they planning on becoming citizens? What country did they come from?

3. Do they know what is required of them to obtain title to the land? If yes, have them sign the form. If no, tell them they have to live on the land for five years, build a house and work the land.
4. Do they have the twelve dollars needed to file? Have them show you their land card. If yes, they may sit down. If no, they need to return later when they have the money.
6. Have students fill out the land claim form. Wish them good luck and you hope to see them in five years.
7. After all students have completed the activity, ask them what they learned. Tell them to write their name on their land card and
8. return it to you. They will be doing more with their land in later activities.

An Exploring Experience: Have students ask relatives if anyone in the family owns a homestead or filed a claim on one. Then have students in the groups contact the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requesting information on the claim. The NARA will need to know the state, approximate year, and general location of the land claim in order to do a search for information. The National Archives address is Suitland Reference Branch (NNRR), Textual Reference Division, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20409.

Another method to obtain a copy of a land patent is to contact the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Use the internet to explore Land Office records at:
www.glorerecords.blm.gov

**Land Card #1
Claim #1**

You are single, 21 years old, and a U.S. citizen. With \$12.00 in your pocket, you have come west from the Ohio Valley Region to have your own farm.

**Land Card #1
Claim #2**

You are 21 years old, a U.S. Citizen, and head of your family. You have come west from South Carolina with \$12.00 to file a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #3**

You are not a citizen of the U.S., but are 25 years old, and single. You left your native country of Germany to own land. You have \$18.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #4**

You are 27 years old, head of your family, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your native country of Ireland with \$10. You must earn \$2 dollars. Wait five minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #5**

You left Upstate New York with \$19.00. You are 30 years old, head of your family, and a citizen of the U.S.

**Land Card #1
Claim #6**

You are 30 years old, a U.S. citizen, and head of your family. You left the state of Georgia with \$10.00 to come west. You must earn \$2 dollars. Wait five minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #7**

You are a single U.S. citizen who is 21 years old. With \$12.00, you left Boston, Massachusetts to come west.

**Land Card #1
Claim #8**

You left your native country of Scotland with \$13.00. You are single and 23 years old.

**Land Card #1
Claim #9**

You are 24 years old, head of your family, and not a U.S. citizen. You left Czechoslovakia, your native land with \$15.00

**Land Card #1
Claim #10**

You are a U.S. citizen, 33 years old, and head of your family. You left the state of Kentucky with \$9.00 in your pocket. You must earn \$3 dollars. Wait seven minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #11**

You are 22 years old, head of your family, and not a U.S. citizen. You left your native country, Sweden with \$5.00. You must earn \$7. Wait ten minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #12**

You are head of your family, 23 years old, and a U.S. citizen. You left the state of Virginia with \$20.00 in your pocket to come west.

**Land Card #1
Claim #13**

You are a 25 year old U.S. citizen who is single. You left the state of Maryland with \$11.00. You must earn \$1. Wait two minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #14**

You are 26 years old, head of your family, and not a U.S. citizen. You left your native country of Italy with \$14.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #15**

You are single, 22 years old, and not a U.S. citizen. With \$22.00, you left your home in Quebec, Canada to go west.

**Land Card #1
Claim #16**

You are 37 years old, head of your family, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your home in Germany with \$13.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #17**

You are head of your family, 25 years old, and not a U.S. citizen. With \$12.00 in your pocket, you left your home in Poland.

**Land Card #1
Claim #18**

You left your home in the state of Missouri with \$10.00. You are 32 years old, single, and a U.S. citizen. You must earn \$2. Wait five minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #19**

You are single, 25 years old, and not a U.S. citizen. You left your native country of Ireland with \$21.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #20**

You are 21 years old, single, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your home in France with \$30.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #21**

You are 28 years old, head of your family, and not a U.S. citizen. You left your native country of England with \$15.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #22**

You are 30 years old, single, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your home in Germany with \$13.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #23**

You are head of your family, 31 years old, and a U.S. citizen. You left your home in Tennessee with \$9.00. You must earn \$3. Wait six minutes before filing a claim.

**Land Card #1
Claim #24**

You are 28 years old, head of your family, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your native country of Romania with \$12.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #25**

You are 29 years old, single, and not a U.S. citizen. You left your home in Ireland with \$14.00 to come to America.

**Land Card #1
Claim #26**

You are 22 years old, single, and a U.S. citizen from the state of West Virginia. You have \$28.00 in your pocket.

**Land Card #1
Claim #27**

You are 23 years old, head of your family, and a citizen of the U.S. You left your home in Pennsylvania with \$19.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #28**

You are a 26 year old U.S. citizen who is single. You left the state of Mississippi with \$21.00 in your pocket.

**Land Card #1
Claim #29**

You are 31 years old, head of your family, and a U.S. citizen. You left the state of Illinois with \$13.00.

**Land Card #1
Claim #30**

You are 26 years old, single, and not a citizen of the U.S. You left your native country of Bulgaria with \$16.00.

LAND CLAIM FORM

LAND OFFICE, _____, 18____

No. _____

I _____(name) of _____county Nebraska Territory.
Do here by apply to enter under the provisions of the act of Congress approved May 20th, 1862
entitled an act to secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the Public Domain.

_____ (location) containing 160 acres. Having filed my Pre-Emption Declaration
there to on the _____day of _____(month, year).

Signature

Land Office at:
LAND OFFICE, _____(Date)

I _____(land agent name) Registrar of the Land Office do Hereby certify that the above
application is for surveyed lands of the class which the applicant is legally entitled to enter under the Homestead Act of
May 20th, 1862 and that there is no prior valid adverse right to the land.

Signature Land Registrar

Unit 2, Activity 4

Proving Up

Theme:

Filing a claim was only the first step. The final step in acquiring a piece of land under the Homestead Act of 1862 was "proving up" that you had met the conditions set out by the act.

Objectives:

1. Students will understand and name the three things that a homesteader had to do to prove that the title of the land belonged to him or her.

Materials Needed: Proving Up Form, Land Cards #2

Subject: social studies

Skills: writing, locating, filling out forms

Methods: Students will continue the discovery activity they started by filing a claim by proving up on the claim.

1. Hand back to the students the land cards #1. Explain to them that it has been five years since they filed on their piece of land and it's time to get the patent or title of the land. They have to prove up.
2. Ask students what they think "prove up" means. Ask them if they remember what they had to do under the Homestead Act, had to . . . build a house, live on the land for five years, and work the land. Ask students how the government would know that the homesteader had met these requirements when there were not a lot of people around.
3. Explain to students that in order to "prove up" they had to get two witnesses to sign a sheet of paper stating that they had built a house, lived on the land for five years, and worked the land.
4. Explain that some homesteaders had difficulties finding two witnesses when he went to prove up. Ask the students what they think this homesteader's difficulties were? Read the narrative:

Narrative: "When my five years had passed, it came time for me to prove up on my claim. I had a rough time of it. My claim was far away from other homesteads and most of the people that lived near me had only been there a couple of years. Most of the homesteaders that were there when I staked my claim, had left their claims and returned to the East. I had to find someone willing to sign my form saying I had lived on my claim for five years. Finally, I got Rick Thomas about five miles from me to sign as he had been on his claim a year before me. He was willing to go to the land office with me and sign the paper as a witness. I went into town twelve miles away to the postmaster's office and came upon James Capper. He was willing to go with Rick Thomas and me to sign my proving up paper as I had signed his the year before. We rode over to the land agent's office. The agent made Rick Thomas and James Capper swear they had known me for the five years past, that I was head of my household, had built a sod house, and had plowed 25 acres of my land for wheat and corn crops. The land agent questioned them and had them sign the proving paper. Rick Thomas couldn't read so he signed with an "X." The agent wrote his name. Everything worked out all right, but I had a nervous time of it. Told Rick Thomas and James Capper, I appreciated their help and to stop by my place sometime for supper. "

5. Give students the land card #2 that relates to their first land card. You may want to attach their first land card to their new land card before you pass them back. This new card tells them how long they have lived on their land, if they built a house, and if they worked the land. Students need to find two people in the room who have been on their land as long as they have or longer. Students should ask those students to sign as witnesses. Students need to take their witnesses to the teacher who is the land agent in order to prove up.

An Exploring Experience: Have students write a letter via mail to the National Archives for a copy of a proving up form. Have students write to the local county office to see what present land deeds look like.

PROVING UP FORM

PROOF REQUIRED UNDER HOMESTEAD ACTS MAY 20, 1862, and JUNE 21, 1866.

We, _____(name of witness 1) and
_____ (name of witness 2) do solemnly swear

that we have known _____ (claimant's name) for over five years last past; that
he is the head of a family consisting of _____ and _____

and is a citizen of the United States; that he is an inhabitant of the _____ of

section No. _____ in Township No. _____ of Range No. _____
and that no other person resided upon the said land entitled to the right of Homestead or Pre-emption.

That the said _____ entered upon and made settlement on said land on
the _____ day of _____, _____ and has built a house thereon
(Type of house) _____

and has lived in the said house and made it his exclusive home from the _____(original date) day of
_____, _____, to the present time, and that he has since said settlement plowed,
fenced, and cultivated about _____ acres of said land and has made the following improvements thereon, to wit:

I, _____do hereby certify that the above affidavit was taken and subscribed
before me this _____ day of _____, _____.

Registrar

WE CERTIFY that _____ and _____ whose names
are subscribed to the foregoing affidavit, are persons of respectability.

_____, Registrar.

_____, Receiver.

**Land Card #2
Claim #1**

You filed your claim in 1916 and built a house. You worked 16 acres from 1917 to 1923 and planted corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #2**

You filed your claim in 1902 and built a house. You worked your land from 1903-1908, planting 10 acres of wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #3**

You filed your claim in 1892 and built a house. You plowed 13 acres of wheat and barley between 1893-1898.

**Land Card #2
Claim #4**

You filed your claim in 1868 and built a house. You worked your land between 1868-1873, planting 20 acres of corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #5**

After filing your claim in 1908, you built a house. You planted 10 acres of corn between 1909-1914.

**Land Card #2
Claim #6**

You filed your claim in 1869 and built a house. You plowed 19 acres, planting corn and barley.

**Land Card #2
Claim #7**

After filing your claim in 1907, you built a house. You worked your land between 1908-1913, planting 14 acres of corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #8**

You filed your claim in 1880 and built a house. You plowed 12 acres of land and planted wheat between 1880-1887.

**Land Card #2
Claim #9**

You filed your claim in 1917 and built a house. You worked your land from 1919-1925, planting 10 acres of corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #10**

After filing your claim in 1883, you built your house. You plowed 12 acres of land between 1883-1889, planting corn and barley.

**Land Card #2
Claim #11**

You filed your claim in 1902 and built a house. You worked your land from 1902-1908, planting 17 acres of corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #12**

After filing your claim in 1872, you built a house. You plowed 22 acres of land between 1872-1877, planting wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #13**

You filed your claim in 1905 and built a house. You plowed 23 acres between 1905-1911, planting wheat and corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #14**

After filing your claim in 1919, you built a house. Between 1919-1925, you plowed 19 acres and planted corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #15**

In 1903, you filed your claim and built a house. You plowed 20 acres of land between 1903-1909, planting corn and barley.

**Land Card #2
Claim #16**

In 1894, you filed your claim and built a house. You worked your land from 1894-1899. You plowed 20 acres and planted corn, wheat, and barley.

**Land Card #2
Claim #17**

You filed your claim in 1913 and built a house. You plowed 16 acres and planted corn and wheat between 1913-1920.

**Land Card #2
Claim #18**

In 1880, you filed your claim and built a house. Between 1880-1885, you plowed 15 acres and planted wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #19**

After filing your claim in 1872, you built a house. You plowed 40 acres of land between 1873-1879. You planted corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #20**

You filed your claim in 1910 and built a house. Between 1910-1915, you plowed 11 acres of land and planted corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #21**

In 1896, you filed your claim and built a house. You worked your land between 1897-1902, planting corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #22**

You filed your claim in 1885 and built a house. Between 1886-1891, you plowed 22 acres, planting corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #23**

You filed your claim in 1891 and built a house. You plowed 10 acres between 1891-1896, planting corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #24**

In 1918, you filed your claim and built your house. You worked your land between 1918-1923, plowing 15 acres and planting wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #25**

You filed your claim in 1875 and built a house. Between 1876-1882, you plowed 15 acres and planted wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #26**

In 1899, you filed your claim and built a house. Between 1900-1906, you plowed 19 acres of land and planted corn.

**Land Card #2
Claim #27**

In 1910, you filed your claim and built a house. Working your land between 1910-1916, you plowed 30 acres and planted corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #28**

You filed your claim in 1901 and built a house. You plowed 28 acres of land between 1902-1907, planting wheat and barley.

**Land Card #2
Claim #29**

You filed your claim in 1884 and built a house. You plowed 13 acres of land between 1884-1889. You planted corn and wheat.

**Land Card #2
Claim #30**

In 1920, you filed your claim and built a house. Between 1920-1926, you plowed 16 acres of land, planting corn and barley.