

# Virtual Capitol Lessons

Lesson Created in Partnership with



## Title: Great Plains Homestead Economy and Technology

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<b>Grade Level</b>	4
<b>Class Period(s)</b>	2

### Nebraska Social Studies Standards

SS 4.2.2.a Give examples of capital resources used in making goods and services in Nebraska and the United States (e.g., tools, laboratories, equipment, and machinery)

SS 4.2.3.a Discuss the purpose of early NE financial institutions (e.g., barter, trading posts, banks)

SS 4.2.12.b Discuss how technology has affected the specialization of Nebraska's economy and surrounding states

SS 4.3.5.e Describe human adaptations to the physical environment.

### Nebraska Science Standard

### Nebraska Language Arts Standards

### Nebraska Fine and Performing Art Standards

# Virtual Capitol Lessons

## Overview

The lesson plan features:

Students use literacy and economic skills by close reading modified historical documents pulled from homesteading diaries of 1911 – 1913. They will understand the interdependence on neighbors through help and bartering, and some cost examples for farming. Comparing and contrasting is also made through “reading” photos of the home they left and the home to which they moved.

**Note:** This lesson is best delivered after being even briefly acquainted with Solomon Butcher’s photographs.

## Big Idea or Theme

Homesteaders had an economy that consisted of currency and bartering.

Technology took on new forms for many homesteaders.

## Essential Question/s:

Higher Level: What was most important to the successful economy of homesteaders, relationships, technology, or perseverance?

Middle Level: How did relationships, technology, and perseverance influence the economy of homesteaders?

Lower Level: What skills were critical (extremely important) for homesteaders to develop to help change the Great Plains from a grass-covered prairie to successful agriculture land?

## Purpose/Rationale

*Homesteading stand-alone lesson:*

Students will understand adaptations, social interdependence, and the homesteading economy of purchases, costs, and bartering. Additionally, students’ appreciation for the hardships of homesteading life compared to their own are often voiced. Appreciation of artistic representation of homesteading in the Nebraska capitol building.

*Compare and contrast with modern agriculture:*

If used in conjunction with a modern agriculture lesson, students will understand how homesteading adaptations, social interdependence, purchases, costs, and bartering compare and contrast to modern agriculture practices. Additionally, students’ appreciation for the hardships of homesteading life compared to their own are often voiced.

## Key Concepts/Vocabulary

### Vocabulary

Dandy – wonderful

Mesdames – more than one unmarried woman, example: Miss Smith and Miss Trujillo

Acre – 43,560 square feet

It’s a peach – idiom, It is wonderful

Worked like the dickens – worked very, very hard

Incubators – A steadily warm place in which to hatch eggs

Winifred proper – the actual town, not the surrounding area

Flax – a slender, erect plant used for fiber to make linen cloth and seeds to eat

Alfalfa – a crop used as animal feed

Perseverance: The desire and actions to keep going even when it may be very difficult, usually because you have a goal to reach

Capital: Wealth or technology that improves ability to produce

Land: The land and everything contained therein

Labor: Work

Capital: Wealth or technology that improves ability to produce

### **Key Concept**

The ability to buy services has changed. During homesteading days not as much currency (cash and coins) were available to settlers and so the barter system of neighbors helping one another was a form of payment used far less frequently today. Bartering is when mutually agreed upon goods or services are exchanged for the benefit of both parties.

### **Reading Instruction Method**

Vocabulary, Think Aloud, Sourcing, Compare and Contrast, Contextualization

## **Materials**

1. Document A
  - Undated photo of Mabel Hendricks Harvey in Fairfield, Iowa
  - 1915 photo of Grandparent Hendricks with Martha and Elizabeth Harvey in Montana on homestead land.
2. Document B
  - Excerpts from Mabel Harvey's diary while homesteading in the Great Plains of Montana
  - 2010 photo of Montana wheat and farm.
3. US Map
4. 2 different colored highlighters or colored pencils / paper
5. A book or online source showing a sampling of Solomon D. Butcher's photographs. The commonly used fourth grade text book, *The Nebraska Adventure* by Jean A. Lukesh has suitable examples of Butcher's photos.
6. Virtual Capitol Tour

## **Objectives**

Students will be able to evaluate the homesteaders helping relationships and technology that eventually lead to Nebraska's modern agricultural society.

## **Procedures**

Quick Overview of Steps

1. Anticipatory
2. "Read" historical photos, Document A. Use the atlas to understand the similarities between Winifred, Montana and the Mixed-grass Prairie / Great Plains / High Plains of Nebraska.
3. Close reading of original historical documents, Document B, diary entries from Homesteader, Mabel Harvey, from 1911-1913.



4. Highlight evidence of technology / capital and bartering / trading labor /
5. Assessment, writing using 5 pieces of evidence from diary entries

### **Anticipatory:**

Using the U.S. map, ask where homesteaders of the Great Plains were coming from. (East of the Missouri River.) Compared to the lives they were leaving behind, give an example of what you think might have been new and different for homesteaders coming to the Great Plains.

- Different jobs and types of work
- Types of homes and the environment / climate
- Being in charge of their own life and business rather than working for someone else
- Opportunity to own land when none was available to them otherwise
- For some women it meant freedom from very limited roles in the more traditional east
- Many used different tools – think factory vs. farm equipment
- Neighbors and isolation
- Cash payment system to primarily bartering / helping payment system

### **Historical Background**

James Raymond (J.R.) Harvey graduated with a pharmacy degree from Drake University. Mabel Hendricks was due to graduate from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in June 1909. She became engaged to J.R. Harvey in April, just two months before graduation, and decided to drop out of college even though they would not marry until October 14, 1909. Not graduating was a decision she regretted the rest of her life.

After marriage in Fairfield, Iowa where the average annual precipitation was about 36 inches a year, similar to southeastern Nebraska, they homesteaded in Winifred, Montana. There the annual precipitation is about 16 inches a year with similar landforms and climate of the High Plains of Nebraska. They didn't have experience farming in that environment.

It is time to be a history detective. To answer our guiding question, read to find out how Mabel's life changed from being a female college student from a family in Iowa, to becoming a Great Plains homesteader.

### **Compare and Contrast Photos – Document A**

Today we are going to use our literacy skills in reading photographs as well as text from a 1911-1913 diary to be able to answer our essential questions.

- How did relationships, technology, and perseverance influence the economy of homesteaders?
- “What skills and natural resources were critical (the most important) for homesteaders to develop and help change the Great Plains from a grass-covered prairie to successful agriculture land?”
- Notice the photos. Really look at the background and find at least three distinct differences. What do you see around the two women sitting in a yard?
- What do you see in the Montana homesteading photograph? These photos are related to one woman's life as she moved from a nice house in Fairfield, Iowa to a homestead in the Great Plains of Montana, an area that is still very similar to the majority of



Nebraska's landforms and climate called the mixed-grass prairie in the Great Plains Region.

- Student Atlas of Nebraska, page 14; upper area of mixed-grass prairie without many rivers would be the match;
- Atlas, page 41,42,43, the upper mixed-grass area has very little population. The Judith River Basin is also the least populated portion of Montana.
- Winifred, Montana has about 16 inches of precipitation annually. What portion of Nebraska has about the same? Atlas, page 9.

## THE DIARIES 1911-1913

### Differences between **Diaries and Reminiscences**

- Diaries and journals are written at the time of events
- Reminiscences are written quite some time, often decades, after an event occurs.
- Which is the more reliable source? Why?

### Model:

**Document B:** Mabel Harvey Hendricks' 1911 and 1913 diary entries.

First we need to look at two very important items; the **source** and the **vocabulary** box.

- Source are original family documents found in a garage at the Kolstad family ranch in Montana. The Ropes and Kolstad families own these and have given permission for us to use them.
- Shoulder partner – Do you think this source is reliable?
- Highlight vocabulary words
- Remember our guiding question. Read like a history detective.

Read the diary excerpts the first time without marking anything.

Upon the second reading, begin modeling highlighting types of technology used or mentioned

- Have students work in pairs to finish finding examples

Upon third reading, model highlighting in a different color, examples of

- Technology and capital of the homesteader's day (first color highlight)
- Purchases, or evidence of trade or bartering, which is part of an economy (second color highlight)

**Model / Share / Guide:** Highlight examples of each category on the displayed teacher copy of the diary. Students share and add to the list. Guide as groups add at least two more to at least three categories. **Independently** they add one more.

### Relationships / Trading Labor

Having meals together

Helping one another

Names of people helping

### Technology / Capital (Wealth or technology that improves ability to produce)

Finished kitchen cupboard

School begins

Disking / Plowing

Drilling / Seeding / Planting

Digging

Ironing / Washing /on the line

Snow shoes

Cottage is 24 x 24 (construction)

Automobile

Incubator



# Virtual Capitol Lessons

## Perseverance / Labor

Perseverance: The desire and actions to keep going even when it may be very difficult, usually because you have a goal to reach; good character trait

Building their homes, cupboards

Going out for mail, buying vegetables (but none available)

Plowing, disking,

Physical strength, ton, 900 pounds, plowing, disking, washing, seeding, planting, digging  
“Worked like the dickens”

Walking in fierce cold, knee and waist deep snow, snow shoes

## Economy (Monetary & Barter)

Brought a ton of hay

Paid 80 cents

Bought 900 pounds

Buy some onions / none

Brought / bought a piano

Out of tobacco (trading/ borrowing)

Helped Floyd

Helped Olive

Helped Anna and her mother

Sent me fifty cents

Get palm leaf mats

Place to shop

Hotel, pool hall, drug store

Eggs to restaurant man, 20 cents

Flax (to sell)

Alfalfa (for feed)

## Share:

- What examples did you find of...(each category)
- Think about technology.
  - Do most people build their own kitchen cupboards now?
  - Do city people have to go disc a field, drill seeds into the ground, and then nurture a garden to grow most of the food they need to survive?
  - Does anyone really have to “work like the dickens” in order to do laundry now? Can you imagine having to haul water, heat it on a stove, put it in a big pot and scrub each piece of laundry by hand? (Also hanging laundry vs. using dryers)
  - <http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/panos/23> View “The First Furrow”
  - <http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/panos/36> View “The Coming of the Railroad”
- Think about bartering.
  - Bartering implies that people go back and forth a bit until they reach a mutually beneficial agreement of equal worth.
  - Name a skill you have that you might barter with another person in order to receive their help and skill. Example: Mom’s may ask you to babysit and will take you somewhere you want to go if you do. (Give examples of trading food, 2 cookies for your pencil, no 3 cookies, etc.)
  - <http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/panos/23> View “The House Raising”

**Guide:** Class/group discussion to answer the guiding question(s).

Higher Level: What was most important to the successful economy of homesteaders, relationships, technology, or perseverance?

Middle Level: How did relationships, technology, and perseverance influence the economy of homesteaders?

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**Bring Back** for group to share answers and opinions to the question(s).

## **Assessment**

### **Independent (Assessment)**

Answer the guiding question(s) in writing using at least 5 pieces of evidence from the historical documents.

#### Proficient Rubric

Students will produce an essay with at least 5 pieces of evidence pulled from the photos or diary entries that support their argument. Proficiently organized, the ideas presented are on topic and include opinions and inference to support their point of view. Conventions meet the classroom norms and expectations.

## **Extensions**

<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/panos/36> View "The United States Survey" Surveying the land was the marking of land to define boundaries. This was especially important as the railroads received land and subsequently wanted to sell the plots that would create towns. Additionally, homesteaders needed their boundaries marked in what was often very removed plots.

## **Sources**

Ropes / Kolstad family documents. Permission granted by R. Heather Ropes for use by fourth grade teachers in the state of Nebraska.

**STUDENT DOCUMENTS FOLLOW BELOW**





Name:

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### Document A

**“Read” the photos and compare and contrast the content.**

Circa 1910, undated photo. Right, Mabel Hendricks Harvey in Fairfield, Iowa. Probably friend, Elizabeth (Bessie) Smith, on left.



Homestead land, Great Plains, Winifred, Montana, 1915

Grandparents William H. Hendricks and wife Anna Hendricks, on a visit from Fairfield, Iowa, with boy Charles (last name unknown), Martha, and baby Elizabeth Harvey, daughters of James Raymond and Mabel Hendricks Harvey.

Source:  
Ropes/Kolstad original family documents/photos.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Excerpts from the Homesteading Diaries of Mabel Harvey Hendricks 1911**

*Friday, September 8, 1911*

J.R. finished the kitchen cupboard. It is dandy and how we do appreciate it. Mr. Palmer brought a ton of hay. [J. R., James Raymond Harvey, husband to Mabel]

*Saturday, September 9, 1911*

O. [Mabel's sister, Olive] and Mrs. S. went to Nashes for seed wheat. Paid 80 cents per. Bought 900 pounds.

*Sunday, September 10, 1911*

E. and O. were here to dinner. Mesdames Walker and Graber got here just as we sat down to dinner. They took Olive home with them as her school begins tomorrow.

*Tuesday, September 12, 1911*

E. and O.C. went for mail and tried to buy some onions but non for sale.

*Tuesday, September 19, 1911*

J.R. was disking. I get along much better this week as I have decided to begin the day with a song.

*Saturday, September 23, 1911*

J.R. is drilling the wheat seed in.

*Wednesday, September 27, 1911*

J.R. finished seeding 20  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres of wheat for us and 1 for Effie.

*Friday, September 29, 1911*

Mrs. B. and Effie went for O. Ollie K. was with me all day. J.R. and Nels got home at about 8:00 and brought a piano. It's a peach. We love the tone and how we do enjoy the music. We got a bargain. Bought our piano of Miss Eva in Kendall.

*Monday, October 23, 1911*

J.R. and Houston finished digging potatoes today. 30 pounds

*Saturday, November 4, 1911*

Olive and I ironed and worked like the dickens.

**1913**

*Sunday, January 12, 1913*

**Vocabulary**

Dandy – wonderful

Mesdames – more than one unmarried woman, Miss

Acre – 43,560 square feet

It's a peach – idiom, It is wonderful

Worked like the dickens – worked very, very hard

Incubators – A steadily warm place in which to hatch eggs

Winifred proper – the actual town, not the surrounding area

Flax – a slender, erect plant used for fiber to make linen cloth and seeds to eat

Alfalfa – a crop used as animal feed



We went to the Youngs and the to and from was certainly not funny. It is so cold tonight and carrying Martha and facing a driving west wind and wading in snow to our knees was almost more than any of us could endure.

*Sunday, January 19, 1913*

Lee and Houston came over on snow shoes tonight. Lee was out of tobacco.

*Monday, January 20, 1913*

Floyds were here today and also Lee and Houston. Floyd got a horse down in a coulee a half a mile from the house and Anna and Mrs. Reatherford, Anna's mother, walked in while the men got things adjusted. They were nearly all in snow about up to their waists all the way.

*Tuesday, April 22, 1913*

Olive helped Floyd this a.m. She plowed some and liked it fine.

*Thursday, April 24, 1913*

Fiercely windy – Not so chilly as yesterday. Olive disked some and has decided that it isn't bad work at all. Says she thinks it easier than washing. I started our enormous washing this p.m.

*Friday, April 25, 1913*

Warm and pleasant today. Helped Olive get some of the washing on the line and then went over and helped Anna and her mother. We got every room fixed up and how pretty the little home does look, so dear and pretty. Their little cottage is 24 x 24 [feet] and has four rooms and closet, kitchen, dining room, living room and bedroom...J.R. planted potatoes.

*Saturday, April 26, 1913*

Ed Young and wife came out from Hilger in an auto.

*Sunday, April 27, 1913*

Beautiful. Calm day. We all washed our heads. Mother Harvey got 26 chickens out of 120 eggs. Youngs 12 chicks from 104 eggs. Both from incubators.

*Friday, May 2, 1913*

My 29<sup>th</sup> birthday. Too far from town to receive much but good wishes but that and love is everything. Mother H. sent me fifty cents. Bless her heart. I'm going to have some table "palm leaf mats" with that money.

*Monday, May 8, 1913*

Eleanor and I went to Winifred with Doc this morning as he was going to Hilger. My first trip to Winifred proper. It did seem good indeed to have a place to shop. There are now three buildings being erected – a hotel, pool hall and drug store. Miss Young sold some eggs to the restaurant man and he will pay us 20 cents for all we have. Our hens are not laying very well just now. ...Planted peas, beets and radishes.

*Monday, May 12, 1913*

Floyd began plowing for J.R. and me. We hope to have 15 acres of flax planted. Doc was disking the ground ready for corn and alfalfa.



**Source**

Ropes / Kolstad family documents. Diaries of Mabel Hendricks Harvey, 1911 and 1913.

DRAFT

