

AGRICULTURE

Dear Diary,...

Teacher's Workbook
For elementary school



Geography, History and Citizenship Education Program

Society Under Study

/ Quebec society around 1820

Competency

/ Reading about a society's organization on its territory

Knowledge

/ Societal elements that have an impact on the organization of the territory

// *Cultural realities: beliefs, religions, arts, languages, food supply, clothing, leisure*



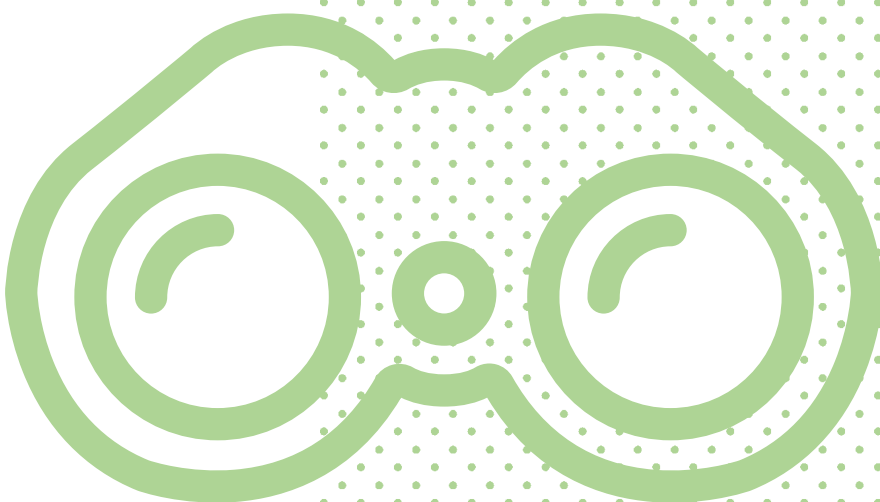
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity aims to study Canadian society around 1820 from a local perspective, that is, from the perspective of the Eastern Townships.

This society began developing in the nineteenth century, bringing about significant changes to the territory. Throughout this activity, the theme of agriculture will be studied. Indeed, before industrialization and urbanization, which would come later in the century, the beginning of the 1800s was characterized by the clearing of forests and the expansion of agriculture. Approximately 85% of families lived off the land at this time, representing nearly 5 000 families. This activity will enable students to explore the daily lives of farmers and their cultural realities.

Through the examination of several historical documents, students will write a diary that reflects a day in the life of an Eastern Townships farmer.

The historical documents and the activities to be completed can be found in the **Student's Workbook**. The teacher plays an essential role in this activity, as he or she will guide students in their analysis of the documents. To this end, the historical context will be the teacher's starting point.



ACTIVITY'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT

AGRICULTURE IN THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS IN THE 19th CENTURY

With the Constitutional Act of 1791, the Crown opened new territories to be settled by Loyalists. This is how Upper Canada was created. In Lower Canada, new townships were also made available. These would come to be called the Eastern Townships, because they were located east of Upper Canada and, more specifically, east of the Richelieu River.

The 19th century was a pivotal moment in Lower Canada. In 1792, new regions began to be made available for settlement. However, agriculture evolved differently in the new township than it did in the old seigneuries. Encouraged by favourable tariffs on wheat (the corn laws), colonies of the British Empire attempted to produce a surplus of wheat destined for exportation. In the 1830s, Lower Canada suffered an agricultural crisis. Harvests in the seigneuries were disappointing, their farming methods were dated, and the environmental conditions were poor. For these reasons, Lower Canada was obliged to import wheat from Upper Canada to

meet the needs of its population. This crisis did not affect the Eastern Townships, where the harvests remained very good. However, its inhabitants were unable to ship wheat to the markets in Lower Canada due to the poor states of the roads. Agricultural difficulties in Lower Canada therefore had several consequences: a rural exodus, a dip in British immigration, and a reorientation of farming practices. Over the course of the 19th century, the Eastern Townships region would come to distinguish itself from the rest of the colony by its agricultural production.

Eastern Townships farmers were groundbreaking and quickly specialized in dairy farming (ex. production of cheese, butter, milk, cream) some decades before the rest of the province. Starting in the 1850s, the development of the railway and the deployment of wagons allowing produce to remain fresh enabled the distribution of produce towards various markets in Quebec and in the United States.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Preparation

The Development of the Eastern Townships

- / This activity proposes readings related to the organization of society on its territory.
- / The first task consists of analyzing two maps.
- / This activity may take place in large or small groups.
- / To guide students in their interpretations of a map, they should carefully observe the following elements:
 - // the title;
 - // the legend and the scale;
 - // the cardinal points;
 - // landmarks

/ Map 1: Constitutional Act of 1791

// Question 1: Before the arrival of the Loyalists, these territories were occupied by First Nations communities. In the Eastern Townships, the Abenaki camped on the territories bordering the rivers during the hunting and fishing seasons. These were temporary encampments.

// Teachers may ask students why the Eastern Townships are called this way. By referring to the compass rose, they will be able to see that the Townships are located East of Upper Canada and of Montreal.

/ Map 2: Map of the Eastern Townships Lands

// Question 2: This map represents the separation of the territory into townships. The main difference between a township and a seigneurie is that the French seigneurie system divides the territory into strips of land whereas townships are land that is divided into squares.

// Teachers may ask students about the rights and obligations of the tenants and of the seigneur, or lord. The purpose is to compare the two models by which the land is divided. In the townships, there are no seigneurs. Inhabitants were therefore not obliged to pay dues.

FURTHER AVENUES OF EXPLORATION USING THE MAPS

- / The purpose of this activity is to locate the township in which the students currently live. If some students in the group do not live in the Eastern Townships, it is possible to use different regional landmarks that the students know well to carry out the activity. For example: in what township is Granby Zoo located? In what township are the Bromont waterslides located? (Brome township).
- / Teachers may use the compass rose to work with the students.
 - // *For example: Which township is located north of Orford?*
- / Teachers may ask students if they recognize any of the places indicated on the map.
- / Teachers may ask students how they think the territory was inhabited before the arrival of the settlers.
 - // *Help the students understand that the Eastern Townships are a recently developed territory. Settlement has changed the layout of the territory.*
- / Help the students understand and name everything that was not present on the territory 200 years ago (ex. roads, bridges, power lines, schools, hospitals, factories, dams).
- / Additional information for the teacher (advantages and disadvantages of the occupied territory)
 - // *In general, most large and very large properties are in the southernmost townships (Eaton, Stanstead, Philipsburg, Hereford), whereas the northernmost townships (Wottom, Ham, Windslow, Milton, Saint-Georges-de-Windsor) have the most small-scale properties. Very early on, capitalist agriculture made its appearance in the Stanstead Township. This meant that the crops produced were resold on the markets. Townships that were inhabited ever since early settlement, such as Shipton and Compton, had more cleared lands than hillier townships such as Sutton, Bolton or Windsor.*



TASK

Photography: A Window into the Past

- / Analyze images to help students reflect on the changes that have taken place in agriculture over the past 200 years.
- / Upon completing this task, students should understand the following elements:
 - // *tools have changed;*
 - // *mechanized farming equipment has made the work of farmers much easier;*
 - // *women and children also worked in the fields;*
 - // *The work of a farmer at the beginning of the 19th century must have been much more difficult than it is today.*
 - // ...

In the Footsteps of a Stanbridge Farmer

- / Analyzing this document is a means to encounter the daily life of a farmer at this period.
- / The purpose is to help students reflect on a typical day in the life of a farmer in the 19th century.

RETURN AND REVIEW

DEAR DIARY,...

- / To reinvest what was learned in this activity, students must write their own daily diary as though they were an Eastern Townships inhabitant in 1820.
- / Students may work in teams to collect and share information. This way, each student will be responsible for the analysis of one document.
- / Student must write their diaries individually. The purpose is to reflect on the daily life of a farmer at the beginning of the 1800s.

FURTHER AVENUES OF EXPLORATION

- / The return and review activity can take many different forms based on the time available. For example, students can engage in further research to learn more about the township chosen and about its history.
- / The diary can also take the shape of an audio recording or of a comic strip. It is also possible to make this activity the subject of an oral presentation, or to ask students to recreate an old diary and to write with a feather, nib and ink to complete the task.





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Legal Deposit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales Québec, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ETRC's educational materials have been made possible through generous funding by the Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers (SQREA).

Ministère
du Conseil exécutif
Québec 

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