

IOWA PAST TO PRESENT TEACHERS GUIDE
Revised 3rd Edition

Chapter 5: Pioneer Life on the Prairie

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Following the completion of the readings and activities for this chapter, students will have acquired the following understandings:

- a. Pioneers raised or made most of the items they needed for daily life.
- b. Pioneer families developed a sense of social community and interdependence by sharing work and social events.

VOCABULARY TO KNOW

loom	sod house
poultice	spinning wheel
puncheon flouring	straw pallet
root cellar	

FOR FURTHER STUDY

A visit to Living History Farms near Des Moines will provide firsthand observation of pioneer life on the prairie. The 1850 farm and the 1900 farm both provide a window into the lives of pioneer settlers.

Activity 5-1: COMPARING PIONEER HOMES

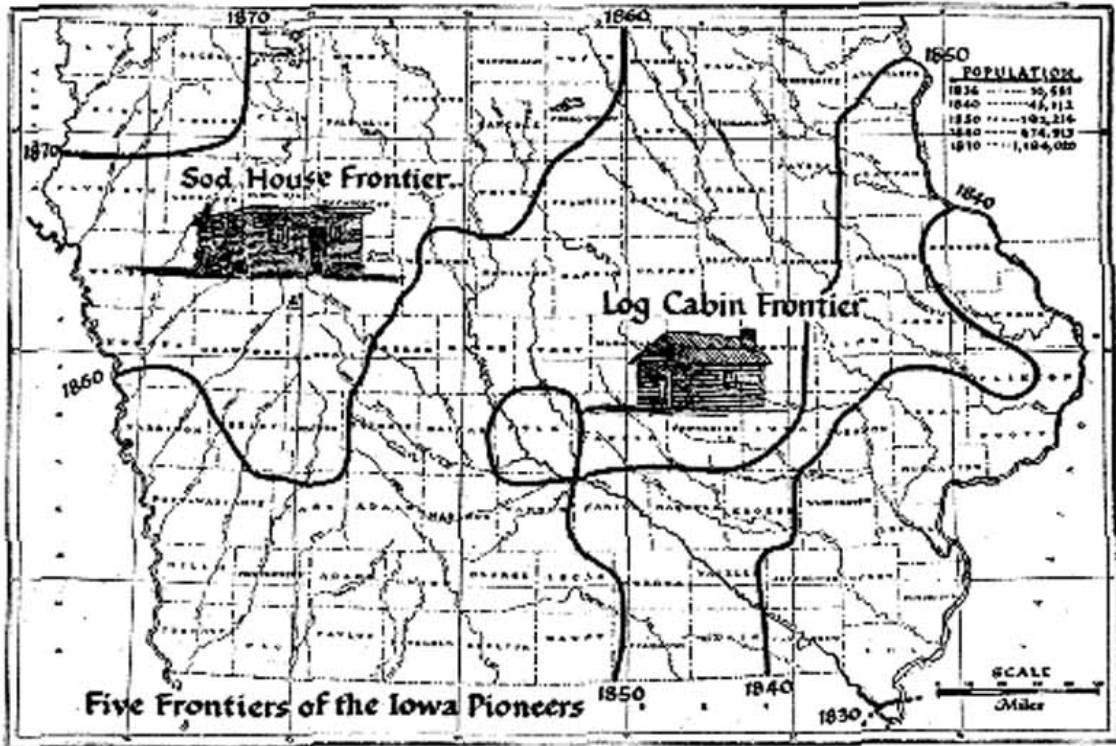
Skills. Reading maps, creating charts from given data or information

Materials. Map of five frontiers of the Iowa pioneers, 1870 *Iowa State Almanac* account of pioneer building (in text), student copies of handout 5-1

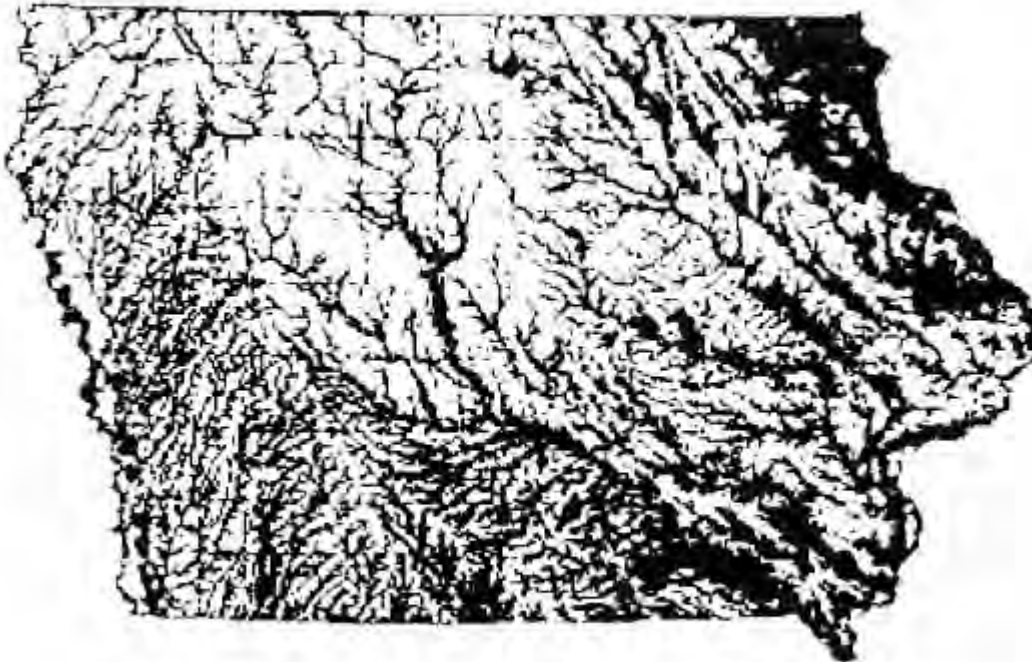
Procedure

1. Find map of frontiers of settlement in Iowa (in text). Discuss the progressive settlement of Iowa between 1840 and 1870. Discuss the relationship between the type of land and the type of homes built in the frontier period. Trees were plentiful in southeast Iowa, and thus log cabins were common. Trees were less prevalent in northwest Iowa, thus sod homes were more common. (See Iowa's Native Vegetation Map).
2. Allow time for students to read the instructions for making each type of house. Distribute copies of handout 5-1. Have students work with partners to complete the chart.

Five Frontiers of the Iowa Pioneers



Iowa's Native Vegetation Prior to Pioneer Settlement



Most of the forests were located along the rivers (areas shaded black).
Prairie grass covered the rest of the state.
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

COMPARING LOG CABINS AND SOD HOUSES

Directions. Using the information in the text, complete this chart.

	Sod Houses	Cabins
Materials needed		
Advantages		
Disadvantages		
Typical Location in Iowa		

Activity 5-2: THE CROWDED CABIN

Skills. Collecting information from secondary source material

Materials. Large sheets of wrapping paper, tape or string for partitioning the room

Procedure

1. Prior to class, partition off a sixteen-by-eighteen-foot section of the classroom using tape or string. Have the students sit down inside the space, identifying the area as being the size of a typical cabin.
2. Read and discuss the section of the text chapter titled, "Building Homes on the Prairie" while sitting together in the "cabin."
3. Using the large sheets of wrapping paper, have students make the various items found in the cabin by placing appropriately sized pieces of paper on the floor as place holders. Designate locations for doors and windows.
4. Discuss the crowded conditions often found inside a cabin and the implications this had for the lives of the pioneers.