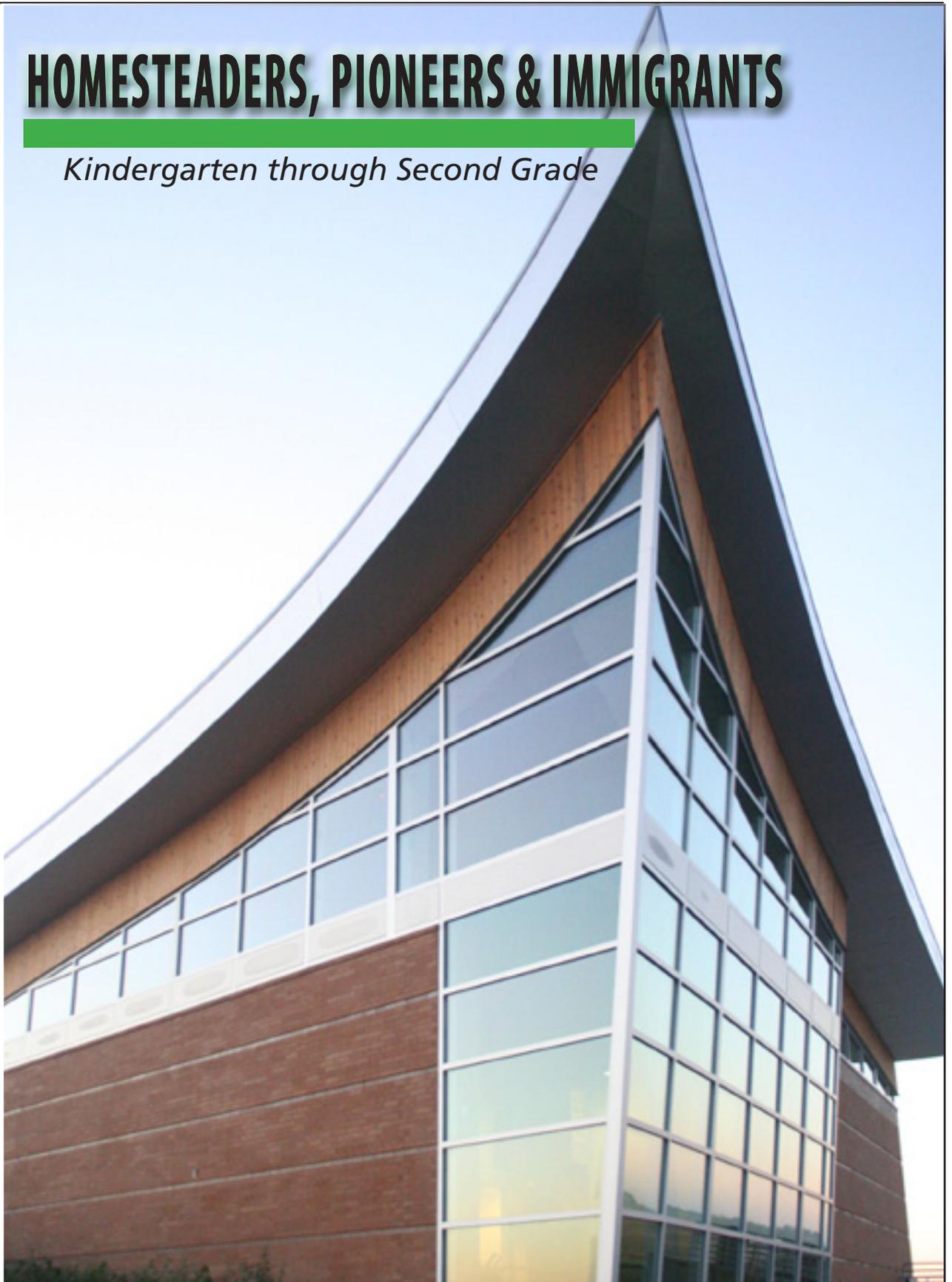


Free Land was the Cry!

HOMESTEADERS, PIONEERS & IMMIGRANTS

Kindergarten through Second Grade



Homestead

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Homestead National Monument
of America, Nebraska



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Some of the ideas in this lesson may have been adapted from earlier, unacknowledged sources without our knowledge. If the reader believes this to be the case, please let us know, and appropriate corrections will be made. Thank you.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



For the homesteaders, life on the Plains was rough and hard. Everyone had to pitch in to help the family survive. The men plowed, planted, and harvested the crops.

They took the grain to the nearest mill, which could take several days of traveling. The women

took care of the house and the garden. They often sold butter and eggs to supplement the family income. This money paid for the extras the family could not

otherwise afford. Children helped out wherever they were needed. They might gather buffalo or cow chips for fuel, herd the animals, help in the fields, or any other tasks that needed to be done.

Helping out one's neighbor was common place on the plains. Settlers held gatherings or bees. Neighbors might help plow a field, build a barn or house, or husk the corn. These bees were opportunities for homesteaders to help each other out and socialize at the same time.

Hardships abounded on the prairie. Homesteaders faced many difficulties while living on the Great Plains. Isolation and loneliness created some of the most difficult moments, especially for women who seldom left their homesteads.

The climate of the plains was harsh to the home-

steaders. One year a homesteader might face a drought while the next year a flood might ruin every hope of an abundant crop. Prairie fires and

grasshopper invasions were also constant threats.

Many homesteaders could not handle the overwhelming obstacles in their path. Those who came to homestead with the lure of cheap lands left "busted and disgusted" at the hard life on the prairie. In several areas almost half the homesteaders left. Others stayed to "tough it out."

At one time or another many homesteaders had to face making the decision to stay on their homestead or head back east. There is no doubt that life was hard. For many, the cost of staying was too high.

'Uncle Sam is Rich Enough to Give Us All a Farm.'

1850's popular song

Lyrics to song in the back of this unit

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about life in the homesteading era.
- Students will practice some of the skills necessary to survive in the homesteading era.
- Students will be able to name different chores a homesteader would have to do each day.
- Students will be able to understand the routine in the daily life of a homesteader.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

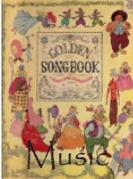
NSS-USH.K-4.1 LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, NOW AND LONG AGO

Understands family life now and in the past, and family life in various places long ago.

Understands the history of the local community and how communities in North America varied long ago.

NSS-USH.K-4.2 THE HISTORY OF STUDENTS' OWN STATE OR REGION

Understands the people, events, problems, and ideas that were significant in creating the history of their state.

SPECIAL ICONS	 Homestead Handout	Science 	Math 	Social Studies 	 Music	 Language Arts
	Indicates a reproducible handout is included	Indicates an additional science activity	Indicates an additional math lesson	Indicates an additional social studies lesson	Indicates an additional music or art activity	Indicates an additional language arts lesson

Pre-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



The most famous images of sodbusters are those taken by Solomon Butcher in Custer County, Nebraska, during the 1880's. An emigrant to the region who found that he had no talent for farming, Butcher became a travelling photographer whose pictures provide us with unmatched documentary record of a unique period in American history.

His images have been digitized and can be found

BUILDING A SOD HOUSE

After a person filed a claim under the Homestead Act of 1862 he or she had to decide what kind of home to build. Homesteaders had to use the resources which were available to them. For example, if the land had trees then a log cabin could be constructed. If there were no trees then the homesteader would most likely build a sod house or soddie. In most cases a dugout was built until a more permanent home could be built.



Solomon D. Butcher's photograph of Sylvester Rawding and his family in front of their sod house north of Sargent, Nebraska, in Custer County.

Preparation

Show the students pictures of soddies or read about how soddies were built. A good book for background information is *Sod Walls* by Roger Welsch. Make a soddie to demonstrate to students before they begin the project.

Instruction

Just as pioneers would have worked together to construct a soddie, have students work together in small groups to construct one. Using a ruler or table knife, cut sod from sheets of clay. Have students build their soddie. They can use flat craft sticks to frame doors and windows. The students can design the grass with trees and flowers if desired.



Each national park site has its own special story to tell. Homestead National Monument of America's story is about homesteading, but there are other sites to visit which will increase your understanding of the pioneer experience. One is Scotts Bluff National Monument in Nebraska. Towering eight hundred feet above the North Platte River, Scotts Bluff has been a natural landmark for many people, and it served as the path marker for those on the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pony Express Trails. Visit www.nps.gov/scbl for more information.

BUILDING A LOG CABIN

Pre-Visit Activity #2 (suggested)



Preparation

Show the students pictures of log homes or read about how log homes were built. A good series to read is the Little House on the Prairie books. Many of them describe different types of pioneer homes.

Before you teach the students how to make a log cabin, you need to have one

made first so they can see what the end product will look like.

Instruction

Each student will receive about 45 pretzel sticks (logs). It does not matter if they are straight or not or even if they are broken. The pioneers had to make do, so must our kids! Also, give each student a piece of green construction paper for grass. The students should put their name on the top of the paper before beginning. Then, using Elmer's glue, have the students make a box about the size of the pretzel sticks. They shouldn't worry if the lines are perfectly straight. Then lay down the four sticks, to make the foundation. It should look like a pretzel stick box, where you can see the green paper in the center. Continue to alternate glue and a "log," until you get three logs high. At this point, you need to wait and let it dry a little. Continue until the cabin is about 6 logs high on each side. You might want to begin with the roof while waiting for the cabin to dry. The roof is easier to do in sections. For example, glue five logs together, then another five, waited for them to dry and then glue them together to make one side of the roof. Repeat the process for the other side. When the roof pieces were dry, slant them outwards and glue them to the top of the cabin. One pretzel stick on the seam of the roof will complete your log cabin! The students can decorate the grass with trees, flowers, or whatever.

<http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/1646.html>



Early log cabins were set true to the compass to help the pioneers keep their directions straight. This was helpful on the prairie where there were few landmarks and where, on a cloudy day, it was easy to become confused and lost.

The door was "to the south" to let in light and to mark the passage of time as the sun moved a shadow farther and farther along the floor.

Each national park site has its own special story to tell. Homestead National Monument of America's story is about homesteading, but there are other sites to visit which will increase your understanding of the pioneer experience. Former enslaved African Americans left Kentucky in organized colonies at the end of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period to experience freedom on the free soils of Kansas. Nicodemus represents the involvement of African Americans in western expansion and the settlement of the Great Plains. It is the oldest and only remaining all Black Town west of the Mississippi River. Visit www.nps.gov/nico for more information.



RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE

A Day in the Life of a Homesteader

Homesteaders had many different types of work they had to complete each day. Students will explore the daily chores of homesteaders through a relay race.

Discuss with students what types of chores they do at home now.

What types of chores do they think homesteaders did?

Explain to students that everyone on the homestead pitched in to do the chores. Ask if there were circumstances when boys and girls, and men and women, may do different kinds of work?

Go through each chore in the course and explain its significance to homesteaders.

Once each chore has been explained to students, go to the starting line where baskets of period clothing and other props are ready.

Split students into two teams. Explain that they will each have the opportunity to do at least one of the chores they have just learned about.

Hand out the numbered chores to each team. Explain that the chores must be completed in sequential order, so once they get their chore they must stay in order.

Have them cheer their teammates on as the relay race is run.

After the race is run, gather the students together. Ask what they learned about the daily life of homesteaders and the work they had to complete. Ask them what things they think will be invented in 50 years to make life or chores easier. Ask who they think will invent those items.



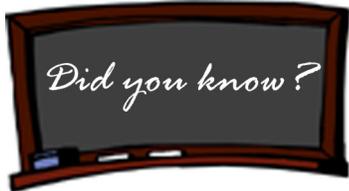
Homestead National Monument of America is proud to be a pioneer in distance learning technology.

Contact the Education Coordinator at (402) 223-3514 to schedule your virtual field trip on Homesteaders.

RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE



Post-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)

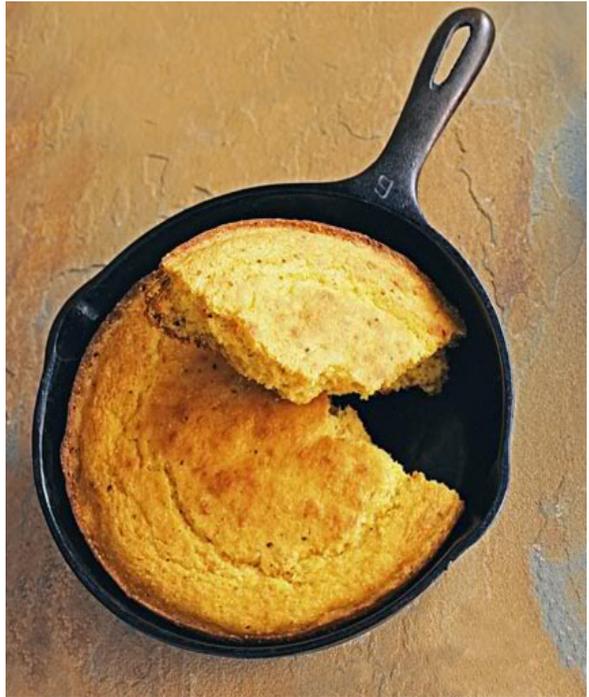


American Indians had been using ground corn in their food for a long time before pioneers headed west. Early European explorers learned to make cornbread from the American Indians. Early recipes referred to cornmeal as “Indian meal.” Cornbread was versatile, easy to make, and inexpensive, so it became popular and took on several forms. Depending on how it was prepared, it was called “hoecake,” which was baked in a skillet, “corn pone,” which was baked in a particular pan which was baked over an open fire, or “johnnycake,” a pancake with corn meal. Cornmeal could also be cooked with water or milk to make a thick porridge that was often eaten with molasses or another sweetener for breakfast. Names and recipes vary from region to region.

MAKING CORNBREAD

Basic Corn Bread Recipe

Mixes are easy and inexpensive and can be used instead of the following recipe. This recipe is easily increased.
Serves 9



Preheat oven to 400°

Mix together:

- 1 c. cornmeal
- 1 c. flour (may use part or all whole wheat)
- 4 t. baking powder
- ½ t. salt
- 2 T. brown sugar
- ½ c. dry milk powder (optional)

Make a well and add:

- 2 beaten eggs
- 1 c. milk
- ¼ c. oil

Stir just until smooth.

Pour into a greased 9x9 inch pan and bake 25 minutes.

Serve hot with butter and honey.

Other Activities

What Else Did Homesteaders Eat?

Provide tastes of other foods commonly eaten by homesteaders such as jerky (beef and bison/buffalo are readily available) or hominy which is found canned in most grocery stores.

MAKING BUTTER

Post-Visit
Activity #2
(suggested)



Churning butter is another activity done by pioneers that is easily adapted to a classroom. If no churn is available, you can use a glass jar with a tight fitting lid and a marble or two. Students will provide the churning action which should be kept at an even, steady rate. This activity needs adult assistance.

- Put cream (room temperature) into churn and constantly keep moving to separate the fat from the buttermilk.
- Once butter accumulates, take it out with wooden utensil/paddles.
- Rinse out buttermilk with water.
- Salt (typically would add, although you do not have to.).
- Mold into mounds and press with butter presses.

Traditional butter churning song

Come butter come,
come butter come,
Peter stands at the gate,
waiting for a buttered cake.
Come butter come.

Post-Visit Activity #3 (suggested)



One of the endless jobs that fell to women was providing clothing for the whole family. This included everything from underwear and socks to winter coats.

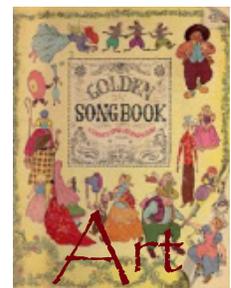
Because of the labor and the self-sufficiency of the homesteaders, nothing was ever wasted. Women saved scraps of cloth left from the production of clothing. Worn clothing was cut apart for the useable fabric which was sewn into quilts. These quilts were used as blankets on the beds in winter. A quilt consisted of the pieced “top,” the middle “battening” (often called batten in pioneer diaries), and a fabric “backing” or bottom layer. Creative and artistic pioneers pieced the fabric scraps to make designs which were given names. A quilt made of different block designs is called a “sampler quilt.”

QUILTING



Other Activities

Ask parents and families to donate scraps of cotton cloth. Students can cut scraps of fabric and ribbon to create a quilt block or a picture.

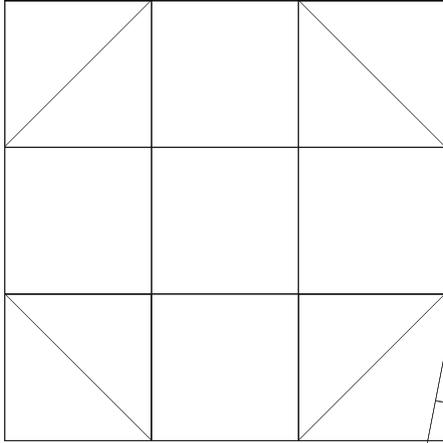


QUILTING

Post-Visit Activity #3 (suggested)

Name _____

Quilt Block

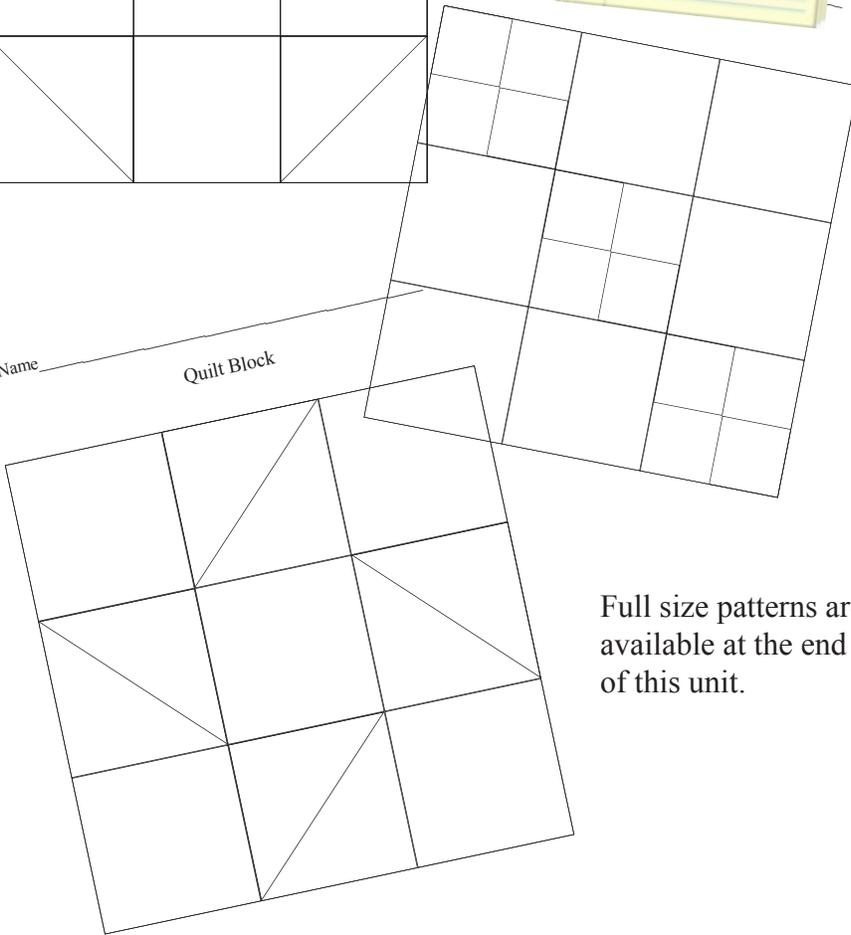


Name _____



Name _____

Quilt Block

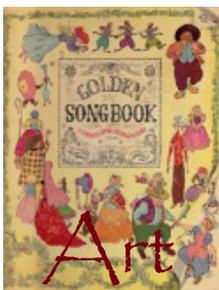


Full size patterns are available at the end of this unit.



Clothing patterns were not readily available to the homesteaders so women often carefully picked open the seams of garments and used the flat pieces as patterns for new garments. If there was more than one female in the family, the same pattern would often be used for all.

Any “cutaways” or scraps of fabric were saved to use for mending or quilting.



After reading the “Did you know?” on page 12 students will color a block of their choice. Have students piece together their quilt blocks on a bulletin board to form a class quilt.

Other Activities

CHARACTER EDUCATION

RESPECT

Respectful students treat people and possessions with consideration. They tolerate other's beliefs and accept individual differences. They do not treat people or possessions with violence, meanness or rudeness. They treat others the way they want to be treated.

5 Minute Focus

On the homestead Howard gets to go to school. His mother packs his lunch in a tin syrup pail. She puts in a sandwich, a red apple and two ginger cookies.

Bessie is not old enough to go to school, but she wants to go so she can have her lunch in a pail.

Her mother says she will pack her a lunch pail and tells her she must wait to eat it until 12:00 when Howard will be eating his.

- Did the mother treat the children with respect?
- Why or why not?

Draw and color your lunch in the lunch pail on page 15.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Creative Quilting With Kids by Maggie Ball; Krause Publications, 2001

Going West!: Journey on a Wagon Train to Settle a Frontier Town by Carol A. Johmann and Elizabeth J. Rieth, Williamson Publishing Company, October 2000

If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon by Ellen Levine, Scholastic Paperbacks; First Scholastic Printing 1992 edition

Inside Laura's Little House: The Little House on the Prairie Treasury by Carolyn Strom Collins and Christina Wyss Eriksson, HarperCollins; 1st edition (September 5, 2000)

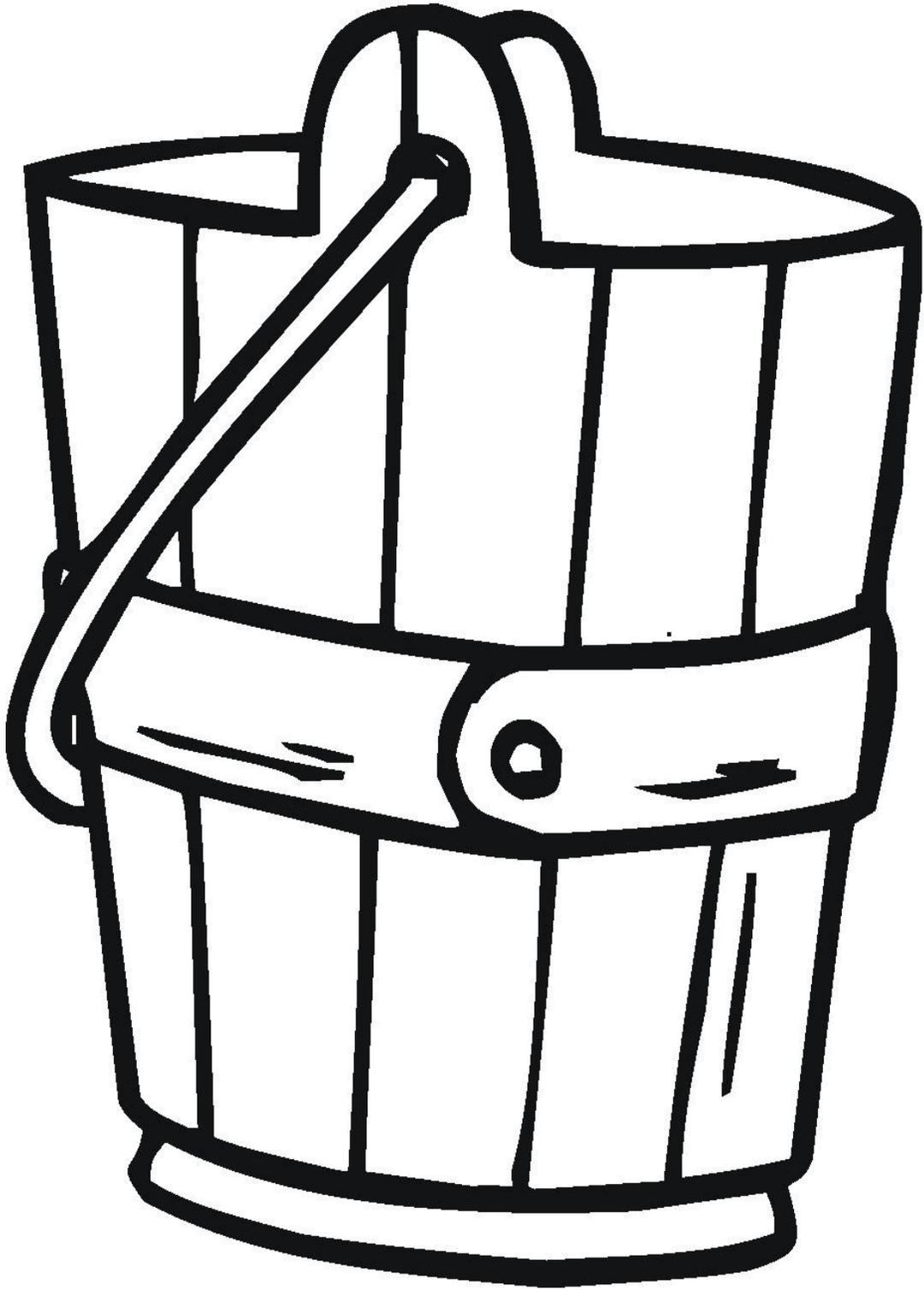
Log Cabin Cooking by Barbara Swell; Native Ground Music, 2008

Quilting Activities for Young Learners by Christy Hale, Teaching Resources, September, 2005

Sod Walls by Roger Welsch, J. & L. Lee Company, December, 1991

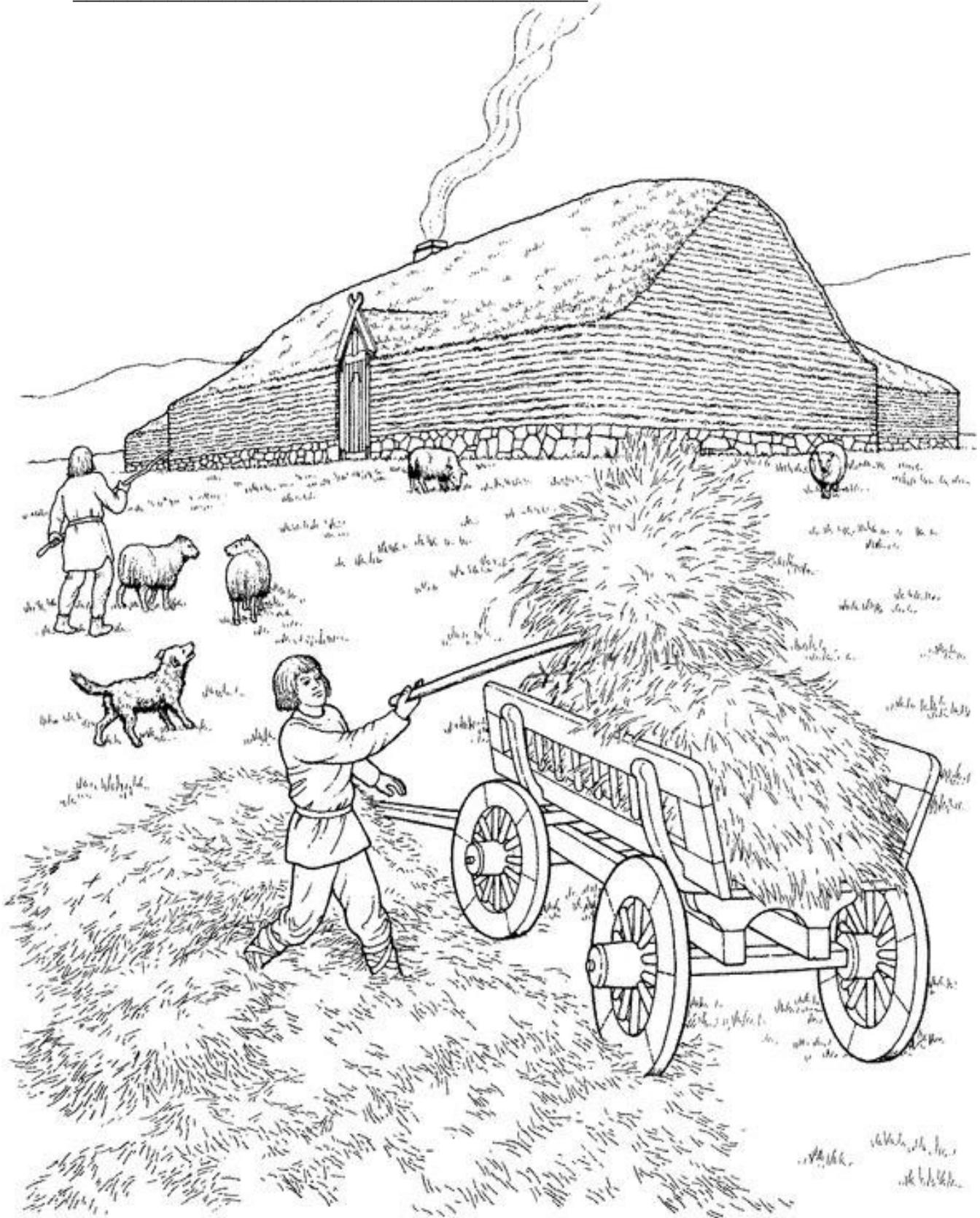
Take Two and Butter 'Em While They're Hot by Barbara Swell, Native Ground Music, 1998

Words West: Voices of Young Pioneers by Ginger Wadsworth, Clarion Books, 2003



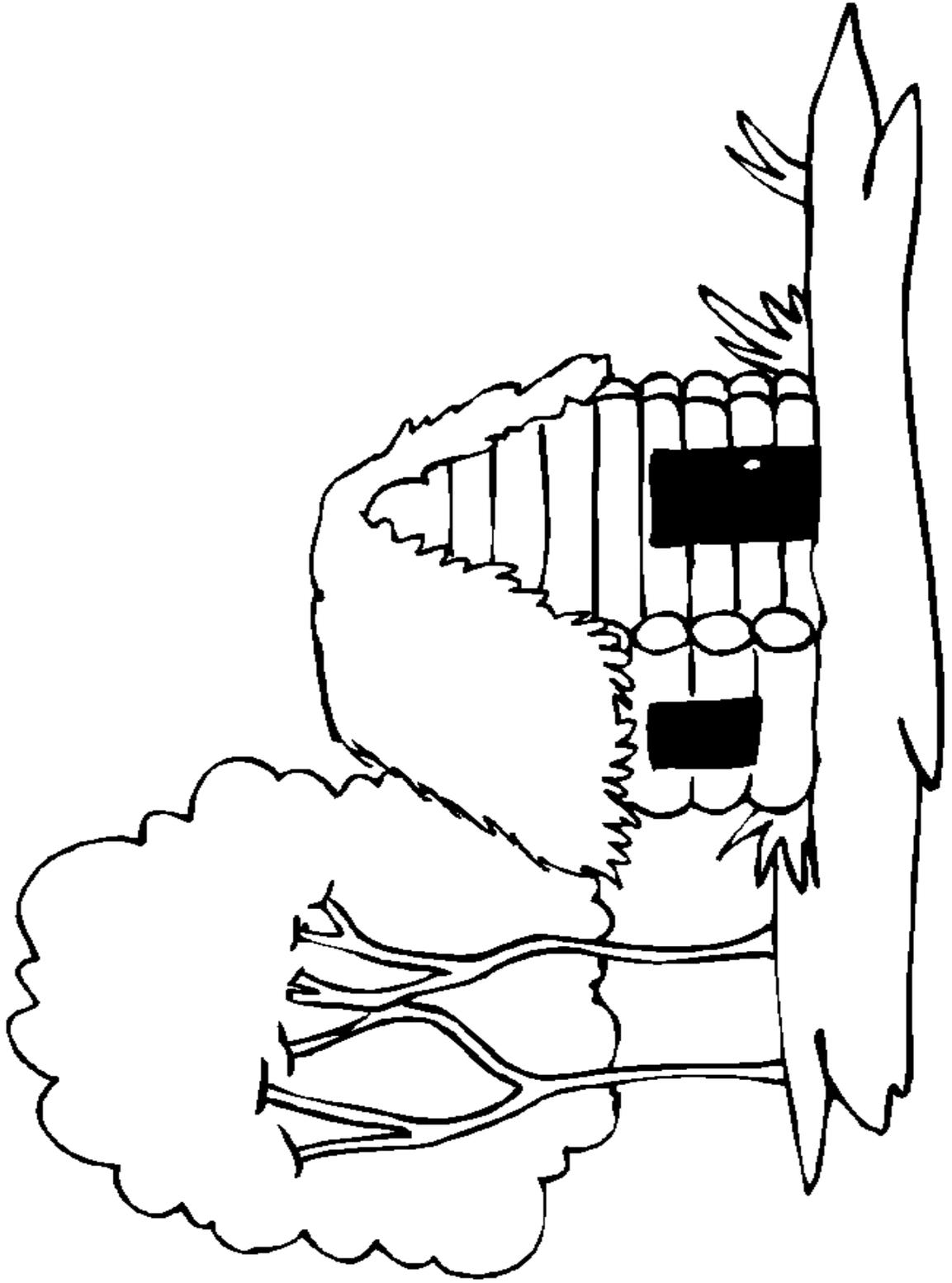
Sod House Coloring Page

Name _____



Log Cabin Coloring Page

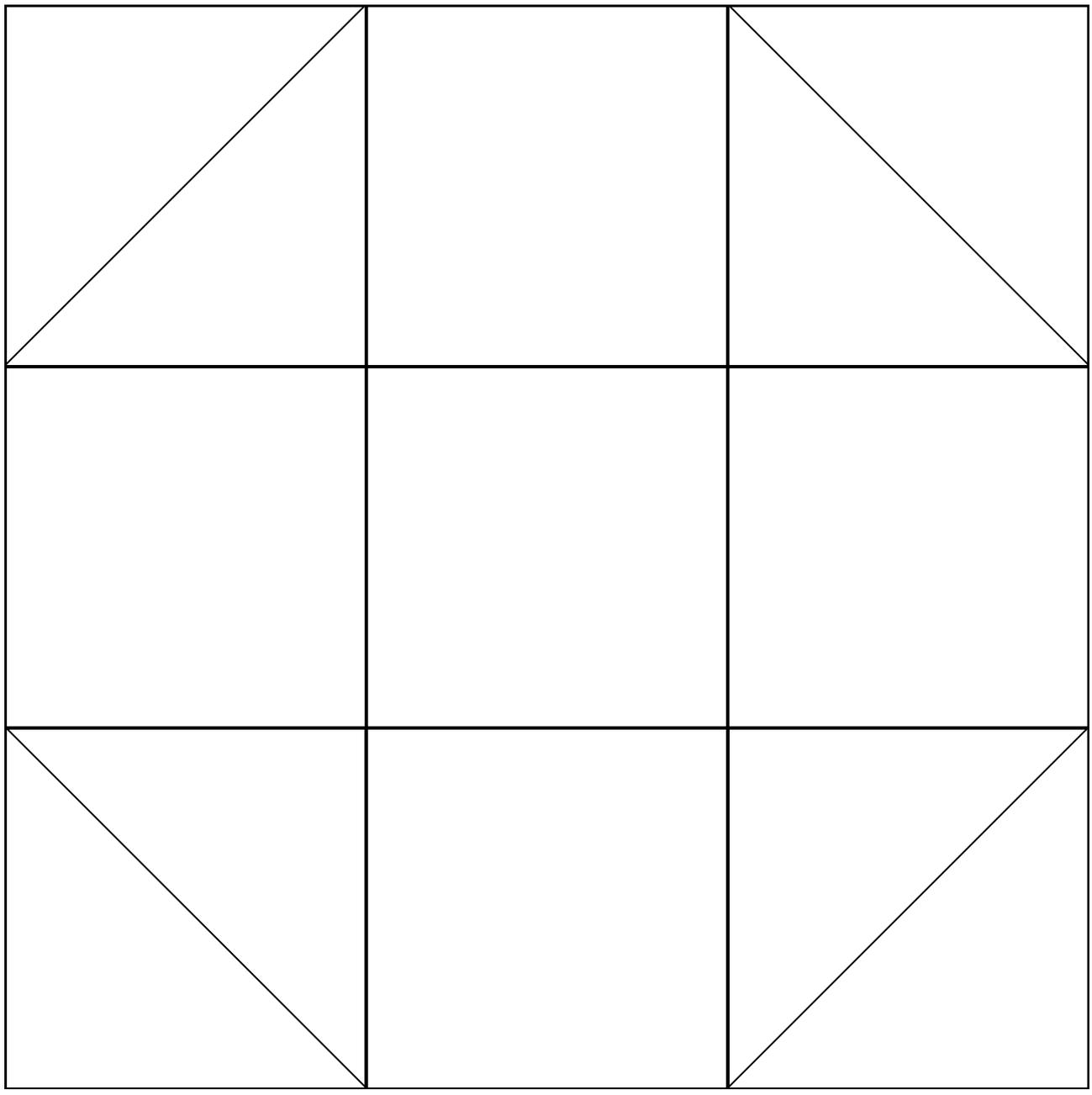
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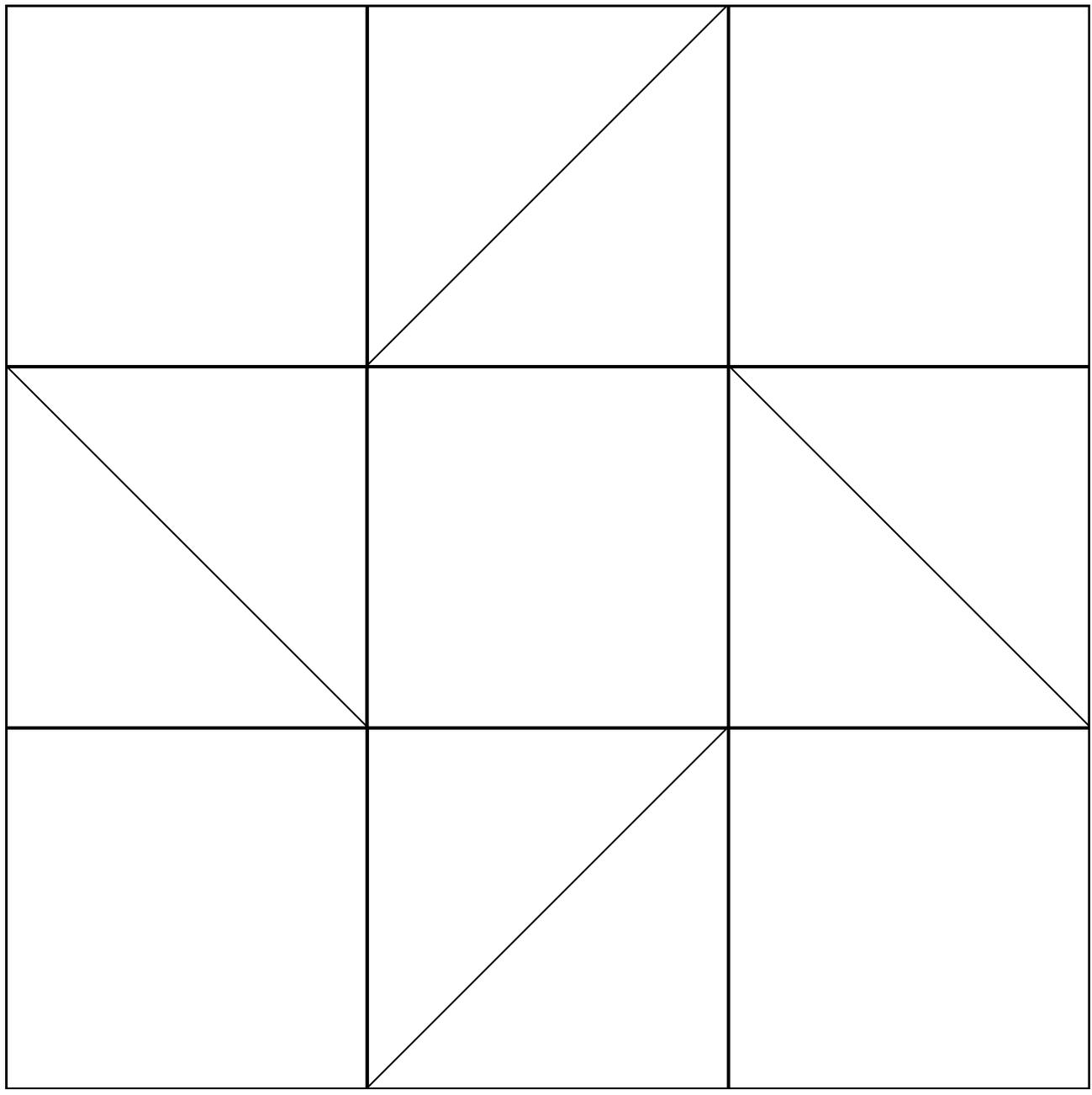
Name _____

Quilt Block



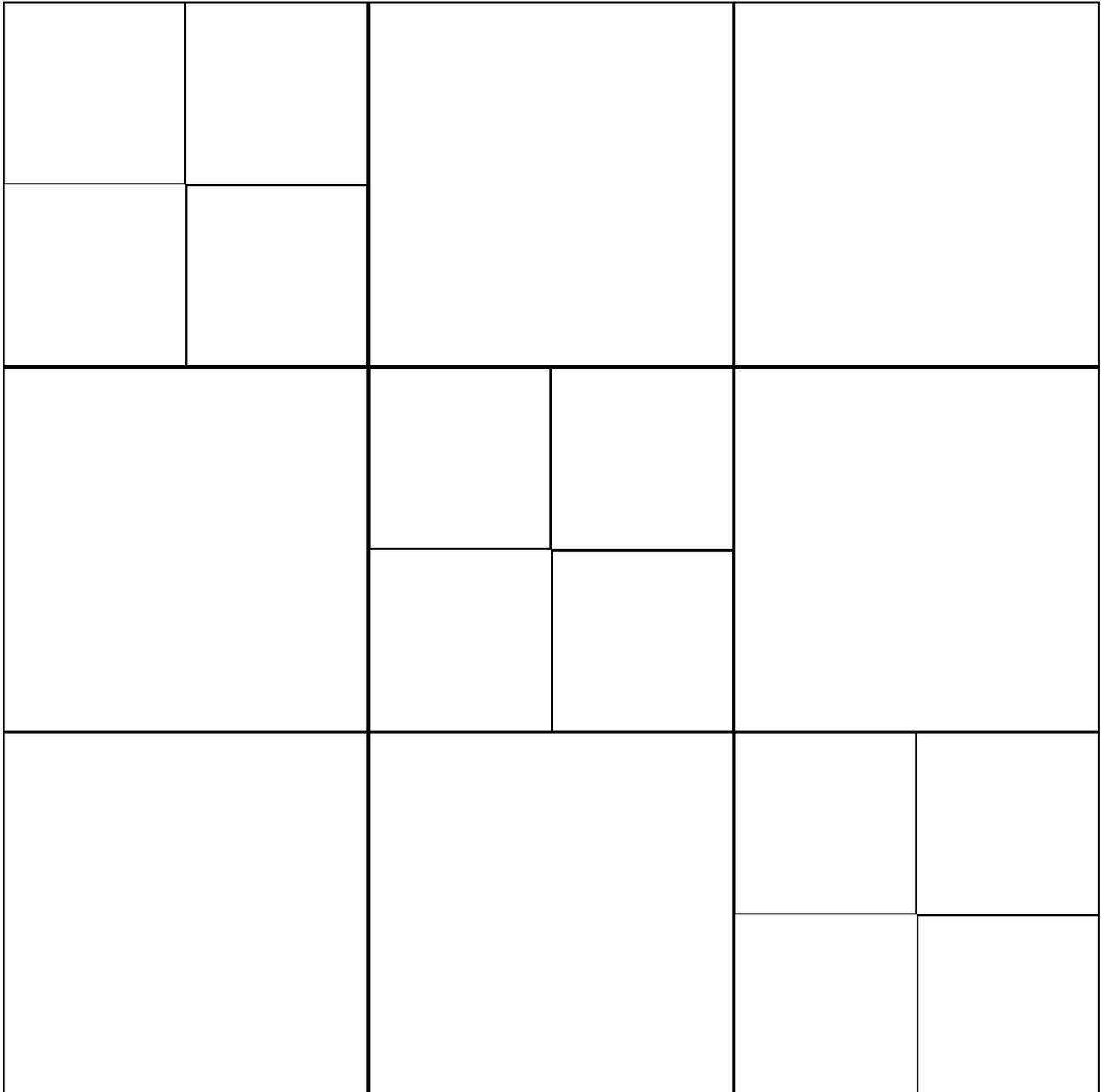
Name _____

Quilt Block



Name _____

Quilt Block



Uncle Sam's Farm

Lyrics by Jesse Hutchinson Jr.

Of all the mighty nations in the East or in the West,
O this glorious Yankee nation is the greatest and the best.
We have room for all creation and our banner is unfurled,
Here's a general invitation to the people of the world.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

St. Lawrence marks our Northern line as fast her waters flow;
And the Rio Grande our Southern bound, way down to Mexico.
From the great Atlantic Ocean where the sun begins to dawn,
Leap across the Rocky Mountains far away to Oregon.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

While the South shall raise the cotton, and the West, the corn and pork,
New England manufactories shall do up the finer work;
For the deep and flowing waterfalls that course along our hills
Are just the thing for washing sheep and driving cotton mills.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

Our fathers gave us liberty, but little did they dream
The grand results that pour along this mighty age of steam;
For our mountains, lakes and rivers are all a blaze of fire,
And we send our news by lightning on the telegraphic wires.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

The brave in every nation are joining heart and hand
And flocking to America, the real promised land;
And Uncle Sam stands ready with a child upon each arm
To give them all a welcome to a lot upon his farm.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

A welcome, warm and hearty, do we give the sons of toil
To come to the West and settle and labor on free soil;
We've room enough and land enough, they needn't feel alarm -
O! come to the land of freedom and vote yourself a farm.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

Yes! we're bound to lead the nations for our motto's "Go ahead,"
And we'll tell the foreign paupers that our people are well fed;
For the nations must remember that Uncle Sam is not a fool,
For the people do the voting and the children go to school.

Then come along, come along, make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way.
Our lands, they are broad enough - don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

From By the Shores of Silver Lake