

# Women Homesteaders of the Great Plains

## *Teacher Resource Packet*

**Presented by Rayma Volkmer**  
Indian Creek Historical Fashions  
*Where History Comes to Life*

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*Women Homesteaders of the Great Plains* is an immersive living history program that explores the strength, resilience, and determination of women who claimed land under the Homestead Act of 1862.

Through **powerful storytelling, authentic historical interpretation, and real-life experiences**, students gain insight into the daily lives, hardships, and triumphs of women on the Great Plains.

This program brings history to life by focusing on the **human experience behind westward expansion**—the isolation, the labor, the danger, and the courage required to survive.

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the impact of the Homestead Act on westward expansion
  - Explore the roles and responsibilities of women on the frontier
  - Analyze the physical and emotional challenges of homesteading
  - Recognize the contributions of women in shaping communities
  - Develop empathy through immersive storytelling
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### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This program supports:

- U.S. History
- Westward Expansion
- Great Plains / Regional History
- Women's History
- Geography & Environment

- Critical Thinking & Historical Perspective
  - Language Arts (listening, writing, reflection)
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## PRE-PROGRAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why would someone choose to leave everything behind to start over?
  - What challenges might families face living on the prairie?
  - What roles did women have in early communities?
  - What would it feel like to live far from neighbors or help?
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## KEY VOCABULARY

- Homestead
  - Claim
  - Prairie
  - Sod House
  - Isolation
  - Drought
  - Frontier
  - Resilience
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## WHAT STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE

During the program, students will:

- Step into the daily life of a homesteading woman
- Experience the physical and emotional realities of frontier life
- Learn about survival during droughts, blizzards, and isolation
- Hear real stories—including family homesteading experiences in Nebraska

**History becomes deeply personal and human.**

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## POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



### Writing Prompt

“Imagine you are a woman homesteader. Describe one day of your life on the prairie.”

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### Discussion Questions

- What was the hardest part of homesteading?
  - How did isolation affect families?
  - What strengths were required to survive?
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### Creative Activity

- Create a diary entry from a homesteader
  - Draw or design a sod house
  - Write a letter home describing life on the prairie
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## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Map areas affected by the Homestead Act
  - Research local homesteaders in your region
  - Compare modern life to homesteading life
  - Explore how geography shaped settlement patterns
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## PERSONAL CONNECTION

This program includes real family history.

Rayma Volkmer is a descendant of Nebraska homesteaders. Her family’s experiences—including life on the plains and being born in a sod house—are woven into the storytelling.

These are not distant stories—

**They are lived experiences, passed down through generations.**



## **GRANT FUNDING INFORMATION**

### **Funding May Be Available**

This program may qualify for funding through Humanities Nebraska.

As a **Humanities Nebraska Scholar**, Rayma Volkmer provides programming that meets the standards for humanities-based educational experiences.

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### **How to Apply:**

1. Visit Humanities Nebraska
  2. Review grant opportunities
  3. Submit an application
  4. Schedule your program upon approval
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### **Note for Educators**

Grant funding is often used by schools, libraries, and organizations to bring enriching educational programs to their students.

 Assistance and supporting documentation available upon request

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## **BOOKING INFORMATION**

Programs available for:

- School Assemblies
- Classroom Presentations
- Homeschool Groups
- Library Educational Programs

Serving Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and surrounding regions.



## CONTACT

### **Indian Creek Historical Fashions**

*Where History Comes to Life*

- 👉 Contact to schedule your program
- 👉 Ask about curriculum support and grant funding

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