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# LESSON 6: RESEARCH PROJECT

Students research aspects of pioneer life along the Little Bonnechere River, in the Ottawa Valley, Ontario, Canada.

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Level: Grade 5

Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, Computers

Estimated Duration: 2 to 3 40-minute periods

## MATERIALS

- chart paper

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- research pioneer times and document their findings
- discover how remnants of prior inhabitants can be examined to learn how people lived in the past

## HOOK

Read the following passage to the class. These are the words of author, historian and archaeologist Roderick MacKay, who penned *Spirits of the Little Bonnechere, A History of Exploration, Logging and Settlement, 1800 to 1920*. Explain that while presently the land along the Little Bonnechere River is mostly wilderness, the forest, river and artefacts of the peoples who have travelled and lived here for centuries tell a rich story – similar to the settlement patterns of many other parts of Canada.

When one travels the Little Bonnechere by foot or canoe, poking around old farm sites and logging camps, the people of old are seldom far from your mind. In the quiet you begin to imagine you hear things. If you sit long enough at High Falls or Crooked Chute, you can almost hear the voices of the river-drivers of long ago, shouting above the rushing waters.

Spend an hour in the overgrown field at Dennis McGuey's farm on a summer evening and soon your mind is sure to wander back in time, wondering at the struggle it was to coax crops from the rocky soil. Above the gurgle of the river, you may imagine you hear a mother calling to her children playing in the fields, or the quiet jangle of harness on a team of horses hauling supplies up the nearby Bonnechere Road.

In truth, no ghosts haunt Basin Depot, McIntyre's clearing, the McDonald Farm, or the other untold places where death visited the early lumbermen and settlers. Yet the people of the Little Bonnechere continue on in spirit — in the tales of their opening of this land to human use, whether for hunting, trapping, logging and farming, or the recreational pursuits of today.

## PROCEDURE

1. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Each group should choose a research topic from the following list:

- First Nation History and Lifeways
- Logging Operations
- Camboose Shanty Life
- The Fur Trade
- Transportation and Communication Methods (timber, people, mail and supplies)
- Family Life
- Disease and Illness
- Pioneer Dwellings versus Modern Homes

2. Students should conduct their research using the various tools comprising the Land of the Spirits website <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Spirits/English/index.html> featuring the following resources:
  - interactive timeline
  - artifact collections of cataloguing data and descriptions
  - artifact stories
  - glossary of terms
  - bibliography of publications relevant to the Little Bonnechere River history.
3. Students should record information in point form, then transfer notes to chart paper.
4. Ask students to make presentations on their topic, while the rest of the class takes notes. Encourage them to illustrate the information where appropriate.

## **EXTENSIONS**

Students from various regions of Canada or the world can research similar topics, and then compare differences and similarities between the history of where they live and past life along the Little Bonnechere River.