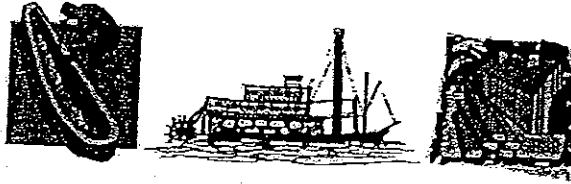


# Life in Upper Canada Information

## Water:



Pioneers usually settled near rivers or lakes. The waters were their highways for transportation and trade. Dug-out canoes were common and birch-bark canoes were used by the Aboriginal to travel longer distances. Larger boats such as steamboats were used on the Great Lakes.

Early settlers also used water from rivers and lakes for cleaning, cooking, bathing, and drinking. As well, moving water powered saw mills and grist mills (flour).

## Clearing the Land:

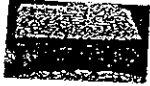
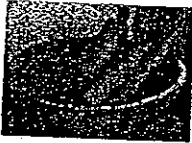

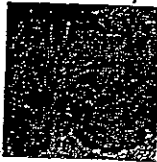

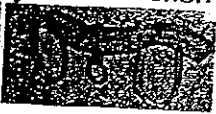


Before they could begin to farm, pioneers had to cut down many trees and remove the stumps so they could plant crops. Before the saw mill was built, logs had to be cut and shaped using hand saws and axes. The smaller axe was used to cut down trees. The two person saw is called a "buck" or crosscut saw and was used to cut logs into pieces that would fit into wood-burning stoves. The large axe is called a broad axe was used to hew round logs into square timbers for buildings.



Sometimes a crop had to be planted before the land was completely cleared so seeds were planted around tree stumps and stones.

Often, community work parties ("bees") would work together for clearing fields, house building, barn raising, making quilts etc.

It was very hard work to clear the land, but the wood was useful in many ways.

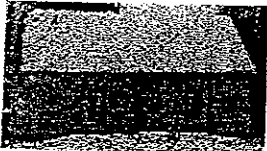
<p>log cabins</p> 	<p>kitchen utensils</p> 	<p>fences</p> 	<p>barrels and pails</p> 	<p>furniture</p> 
<p>yokes for oxen</p> 	<p>farming tools</p> 		<p>toys</p> 	
	<p>hay rake and pitch fork</p>	<p>cradle scythe</p>	<p>checker game</p>	

**Pioneer Family Chores:**



Young Boys	Older Boys and Men	Young Girls	Older Girls and Women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-feeding livestock</li> <li>-gathering firewood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-making furniture</li> <li>-building fences</li> <li>-cutting down trees for lumber and clearing fields</li> <li>-removing stones from fields</li> <li>-ploughing</li> <li>-planting</li> <li>-sheep shearing</li> <li>-fishing (at night for larger catches like muskellunge and eel)</li> <li>-hunting (all seasons)</li> <li>-harvesting crops</li> <li>-threshing</li> <li>-digging water well</li> <li>-barn-raising and house building</li> <li>-slaughtering livestock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-feeding chickens</li> <li>-washing dishes</li> <li>-setting the table</li> <li>-gathering greens (summer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-salting meat</li> <li>-making candles</li> <li>-drying apples</li> <li>-preparing and cooking food</li> <li>-childcare</li> <li>-gathering eggs</li> <li>-carding and spinning wool</li> <li>-planting</li> <li>-milking</li> <li>-making butter and cheese</li> <li>-making ticks and mattresses for beds</li> <li>-making blankets, quilts, and warm woollen clothes</li> </ul>

**Your First Cabin:**



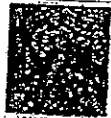






A pioneer's first home was usually made from logs.

The kitchen with its fireplace was probably the most important room in the house. Often it was the only room in the house! The floors were made of dirt. Tables were made from planks and there were benches or stools instead of chairs. Sometimes the room was so crowded, the children had to stand while they ate.

The first house of a pioneer family was usually a one-room log cabin with a dirt floor and a wooden chimney. A blanket might be used to divide the room into two for sleeping purposes. These homes were cold and draughty. As the logs dried, they shrank, making the gaps between them even larger. These gaps were filled with mud or lime plaster, which had to be replaced every year.



## Pioneer Farming:

	The pioneers brought their own seeds for the first planting. They saved seeds of the best plants from their first crop to use the next year.
	They grew grains such as corn, wheat, rye and oats, as well as vegetables and fruits.
	Herbs such as thyme, sage and dill were grown in the garden.
	Pigs were common farm animals because they needed very little care and would eat almost anything!
	Oxen or horses were used to pull ploughs and wagons.
	Sheep were raised for their wool.
	Ducks and chickens might also be on a pioneer farm.

## Pioneer Food:



There were no grocery stores or supermarkets for the pioneers. They had to provide food for themselves. They hunted and trapped animals, caught fish in the rivers and lakes, and gathered herbs, roots and berries from the forest. The rest of the food came from their fields, gardens and farmyards. They grew fruits, vegetables, and grains and raised pigs, cows, chickens, ducks, and goats.

Year round	Spring & Summer	Fall & Winter
-salt pork -potatoes -corn and oat meal -bread -milk, cheese, and butter	-fresh greens such as dandelion leaves -eggs -maple syrup -honey -fish and eels -fresh vegetables (grown in home gardens) -squirrel	-venison -pigeons -wild geese, partridge, chicken and turkeys -hares -preserved meat from livestock (salt pork, sausages, smoked ham) -dried apples -root vegetables (carrots, onions, potatoes - stored in root cellar)

## Winter Survival:

### Preserving Meat

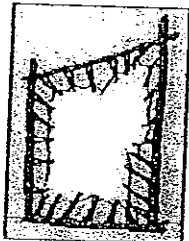


Aboriginal people taught the settlers new methods of preserving meat. They cut strips of deer (called venison) or other animal meat and dried it by smoking it over a fire or drying it in the hot sun. Once the meat was dried, it could be stored for a long time and still be safe for eating. This was very helpful to the settlers who enjoyed this "beef jerky" and found it useful when they were traveling or when little or no fresh meat was available.

The Aboriginal people often used the dried meat to make "pemmican" which was a ball of fat into which they rolled the dry meat and sometimes added berries and nuts. This pemmican lasted for a long time and was nutritious. It was easy to store and became a handy food for the settlers too.

Many settlers arrived in Upper Canada ill because they were not eating properly during the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. All of the new foods that they received from the Aboriginal people helped them return to good health.

### Clothing



Because the settlers could not readily get cloth for new clothing and because the climate was so cold during the winter, many people began wearing the deerskin and other animal hide clothing that was made by the Aboriginal people. The women used deer hides to make beautiful vests, jackets, pants, coats and shoes (moccasins). Beads were sewn onto the leather to make the clothing very attractive.

Many settlers waited for the Aboriginal people to come to their homes to trade for these lovely clothes. Without their help, many settlers would have been very cold in the winter. Animals were trapped and the fur was used to make warm, comfortable outer clothing.

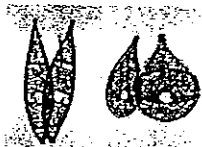


### Snowshoes and Other Help for the Winter

When the settlers arrived in Upper Canada, they required a great deal of assistance to be able to live on the land successfully. The Native people knew best how to travel in winter conditions. Many of the settlers came from areas that were not nearly as cold and snowy during the winter months.

The Native people showed the settlers how to use snowshoes which were made by forming a frame from wood and weaving animal hide or sinew into the center, making a strong net. It looks something like a big tennis racket without the long handle. The frames were tied to boots with leather straps. These large shoes helped the people to distribute their weight over a great area, meaning that they would not sink as easily into the snow. This made walking much easier and faster. Snowshoes are still very useful today.

Native people also showed the settlers how to make and use toboggans which are now very popular winter toys. At the time of early settlement, toboggans were necessary for transporting things in snow.



Canadian Encyclopedia

## Medical Assistance:



### First Nations Medicine

A very serious problem for the settlers was illness. When they first arrived in Upper Canada, many people were ill from the long journey and lack of proper food. The Native people helped the settlers by sharing food, food preparation ideas, knowledge for gathering and producing food and also medicines.

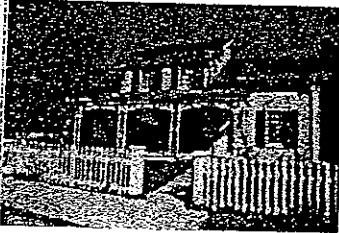
At first some people were nervous about taking the medicines of the Native people but they grew to realize that the knowledge of these people was excellent.

Barks of spruce and juniper trees were used to make tea that was very healthy and contained vitamin C which helped to prevent scurvy. The inner bark of the poplar tree was used in the spring to make a healthy tonic. Many people drank the sap from trees which was also healthy and nutritious. Berries and plants were picked and used as remedies for many things.

Many of these natural products are still used today by millions of people.



### Doctor



The doctor's house often had a special room built onto the side where he would treat his patients.

The doctor would travel many miles out into the country to help people who were too sick to come into the village.

He would often trade his services for food and goods produced by the settlers.

*What if your village didn't have a doctor? (Many villages didn't.)*



If your tooth ached, the *blacksmith* might pull it out with a pair of tongs. He did not use an anesthetic.

Pioneers believed that some diseases were caused by poisons in the blood and so you would visit the *barber* for a bloodletting. He would make a small cut in the neck or wrist and let some blood drain into a bowl.

## Corn:



### Corn

Many of the Native peoples were excellent farmers and taught the early settlers how to make the best use of the land. The women of the Iroquois Nation had the very important responsibility for farming and taught the settlers how to grow strong, healthy corn. Choosing the strongest and largest kernels for planting was important and fertilizing the soil with fish helped the plants to grow tall and healthy. This was wonderful for the settlers because they learned to use the corn for many things.



The Native people showed the settlers how to make good use of the space available by planting other seeds with the corn. They planted beans under the corn stalks and the beans grew up the stalks, using them for support. Pumpkins and squash were also planted under the corn and had lots of room to spread. This method of farming was used for many years.



Once the corn was ripe and ready to pick, the settlers then learned how to cook the delicious vegetable and how to dry the kernels for grinding. The Native people taught the settlers to grind the corn into a kind of flour called cornmeal which was used for making pudding, porridge and bread. The Native people taught them to make bannock, a type of bread that was enjoyed by all.



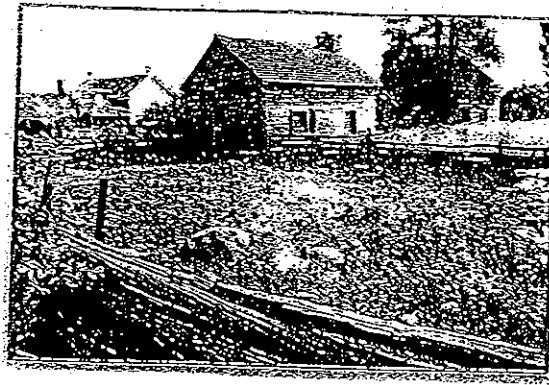
Early settlers were also shown how to dry corn in cribs and use it later for feeding the animals. They also showed settlers how to heat the kernels for a special treat. We call it popcorn!

## Crop Rotation:

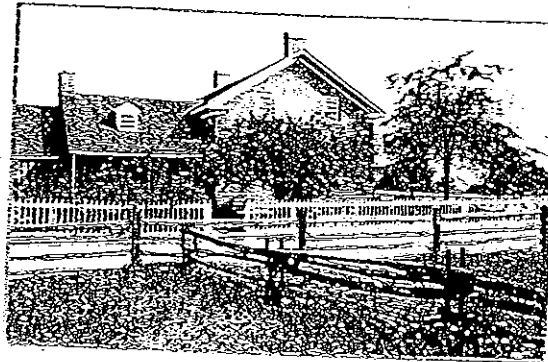


Aboriginal peoples showed the pioneers that planting different crops each year in a field would help keep the soil rich. This is called crop rotation.

## Later Houses:



After a year or two, when there was a little more time, a larger and more comfortable house would be built. It would have a chimney in the main living room and a kitchen as well. The interior would be made of brick. Over the years, the old log cabin would be turned over to the pigs, and the farmer would build a better



A few years later, the family might add on to the log house, or build a new home of fieldstone or sawn lumber, if there was a sawmill in the district. This house would have glass windows instead of the oiled paper or rags that covered the windows on the other houses. Glass was expensive because, until 1825, it had to be imported. After that it was manufactured in Upper Canada.

## School:



School was held in a settler's home, the general store or village church before a schoolhouse was built.

The parents had to build the school, pay the teacher and buy school materials.

The first schoolhouses were simple log cabins with a big box stove in the middle. The students sat on two or three rows of benches and worked at a big table. The floor was dirt and the windows were covered with greased paper instead of glass. Rags were stuffed in the cracks in the walls to keep out the cold.

## Church:

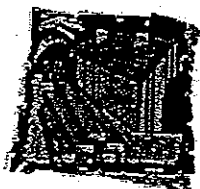


Before a church was built, the pioneers would gather in small groups in a home, the schoolhouse or general store to worship.

When many people of the same faith moved into or near a village, they would build a church.

Because ministers or priests traveled from village to village, they were known as *circuit preachers*.

## Industries and Services:



A saw mill would be built by the pioneers as soon as possible. It provided lumber to construct all the other buildings of a village. The person who worked in the saw mill was called a sawyer.



Bread was a very important food that pioneers ate every day. To make bread they needed flour. Flour is made by grinding grains of wheat, corn, rye or oats. The pioneers could grind the grains by hand but it was a very difficult job and took a long time. In most pioneer villages, a grist mill was built as soon as possible because it used machinery to grind the grain.



The blacksmith made things mostly out of iron, which is black. That's why he was called a blacksmith. It was a hot and tiring job but very important to the pioneers.

The general store was both a trading center and meeting place.



The pioneers usually did not have money. They traded their extra crops or things they made for the supplies they needed. This was called the *barter system*. The store was also the place where villagers came to meet, share news and even play games such as checkers.

Below: One of the early industries was weaving woolen and linen fabrics.

As more fields were cleared in Upper Canada, more wheat was grown. Farmers could sell wheat for cash. Villages began to grow at places that were convenient for the farmers, like crossroads or mill sites. In the villages the farmers could sell their wheat and purchase goods with the money. A fairly large village could be expected to provide the following services for its local farmers: stores, taverns, shoemaker, blacksmith, miller, carpenter, lawyer, doctor, wagonmaker, tinsmith, tailor, school, church, and newspaper.

