

Unit: Colonies in the Wilderness
Topic: Life in Early British North America
Assignment: A New Home

Role Card*

Name: Alex Macintosh, age 19
Country of Origin: Scotland
Family Information: 2 females, wife 17 and one-year-old daughter
Education/Skills: unskilled, illiterate
Wealth: poor
Religion: Presbyterian

Other: All of your family died of cholera on the passage from Scotland. You met your wife on the ship. Her family also died aboard the ship.

Month you purchased your lot: April

Equipment/Supplies you have:
I broad axe, some nails, garden seeds

Location Ticket: Concession 3, Lot 13



To help you better understand what life was like in Upper Canada from 1815 to 1838, you are to take part in the following two-part activity. Carefully examine the above painting. Imagine what it might have been like to have arrived in Montreal and to wait on the dock before you proceed to your new home in Upper Canada. Your teacher will give you a role card. You are to pretend you are the person described on this card throughout this activity. A sample role card is above.

All Settlers Must Perform the Following Duties:

1. Clear and fence 2.03 hectares for every 40.5 hectares you have been granted.
2. Build a dwelling house, 4.88 metres x 6.1 metres.
3. Clear one half of the road in front of each lot.

***These duties must be performed within two years of the date of the ticket.

Part 1 – Settler Journal

- (a) Select a role card and decide how to deal with your specific situation. Examine the map provided. Locate your lot and study the map's legend. Highlight your land on the map given to you.
- (b) Visualize in your mind what the land you have purchased would look like. Imagine yourself walking across the land that you are seeing for the first time. Notice the smells, sights, and sounds around you. Look at the reactions of your family members. Experience walking throughout your land and then write a description of your land. **Remember to consider the following points in writing your description.**
- Is your land flat? hilly? Is it covered with trees? rocks? water? swamps? What is the soil like? Is it good for growing crops? What is the drainage like? What wild animals are in the area? Do you have fresh water available for drinking? Is there a river nearby? Will it be beneficial or harmful?

(c) Think about and make plans of what you would do for your first three months. Make brief notes of your decisions. Search out classmates with skills, land or supplies you may need and work together to develop a plan to get settled on your new land. Then write a paragraph describing what things you will be doing in the first three months in your new home. **Remember to consider the following points in writing your description.**

- What skills do you have?
- What equipment do you have?
- What assistance is available from family members, the religious community, hired help, the Native people?
- What food supplies have you brought with you?

(d) Think about and make plans for the next two years. (Remember duties you are required to do by law before you get the deed to your land.) **Remember to consider the following points in writing your description.**

- How do you plan to survive through the first winter?
- What will you do if someone in your family is injured or becomes sick?
- If you are going to grow a crop how will you harvest it?
- How do you plan to meet others in your area? Or does the isolation not bother you?
- Do you feel it is important to co-operate with others in your area? If so, how?
- Do you feel a school should be built nearby? A church? If so, who will build it and how?
- Is transportation a problem? What about roads? Waterways? Do you feel you should be involved in building them?
- How do you “pay for” the goods and services you need and use?
- What ways are there for making money?*
- Check above to see if you have completed all the duties you are required to do?

(e) Think about and make plans for the next five years. **Remember to consider the following points in writing your description.**

- How will the area in which you live change over the next five years?
- How do you plan on looking after the soil so it does not become depleted?
- What will you do if you need more land?
- What industries do you think should be developed in the area?*** How should this be done?
- Is there a need for a village or town to be built in your area? Where would it best be built?
- Would you provide assistance to newcomers? If yes, what kind of assistance? If no, why not?
- What problems have you had in keeping the roads in good condition?

- How have the **Crown reserves** and the **clergy reserves** interfered with your building and maintaining roads?
- How has the land granting system encouraged **speculation**?

Potash was one way for settlers to earn cash after the land was cleared. The large hardwood trees were collected and burned in huge bonfires. Water was poured through the ashes. The liquid was boiled in iron pots until it evaporated. The remaining grey powder, known as potash, was sold to European factories where it was used in the manufacture of soap and cosmetics.

Grist mills for grinding grain and saw mills for planing logs into lumber were needed in pioneer communities. These mills were located near rivers as running water was necessary in the milling process. **Crown reserve—one-seventh of all public land was set aside for the British government by the Constitutional Act of 1791. By 1825 these lands were finally sold because they prevented compact settlement, making it difficult to complete roads.

Clergy reserve—one-seventh of all public land was set aside for Protestant schools and churches by the Constitutional Act of 1791.

Speculation—the act of buying or selling land, at some risk, with the hope of making large profits from future price changes.

Part 2 – Letter Home

You have lived in Upper Canada for years. Write a letter to relatives in Great Britain telling them about your new life. Describe your accomplishments and the hardships you have encountered. You may wish to encourage them to come to Upper Canada by giving them reasons why this is a good place.

Make sure your letter discusses the following issues:

- What circumstances forced the majority of the immigrants to come to Upper Canada?
- What problems were involved in travel to Upper Canada?
- What hardships were encountered during
 - the first three months
 - the first year
 - the first five years?
- What was the importance of family, friends, and Native neighbours?
- What geographic features hindered settlement? What factors helped settlement? How could settlement of Upper Canada have been carried out more efficiently?
- How did your area change during the first five years?
- What cultural groups settled in your township? Is there evidence of a pattern of kinship (or cultural) settlement? Why did people (in history) settle in cultural groups? What advantages does this type of settlement have? What disadvantages are there?
- Suppose that someone from the government (the Legislative Assembly) comes to your community. He asks you to fill out a questionnaire on how you have cleared the land, how many animals you own, and other questions. He also asks you to name things you feel prevent the improvement of your township. What complaints or grievances would you give him?

Part 3 – Update Role Card

You will complete the following sheet with update information for your character. The information on your update role card should reflect the changes your character has gone through over the time period of this project

Role Card*

Name: _____ Age: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Family Information: _____

Education/Skills: _____

Wealth: _____

Religion: _____

Other: (include things such as relatives, partnerships and other
Items that give background to your characters life in BNA)

Your lots: _____

Land Information: (houses, crops, rental lands etc.)

Equipment/Supplies you have:

A Township in Upper Canada



Legend



