

## 2026 Special Emphasis

### Study Resources

The Wild West of cowboys, trail drives and the Great Indian Wars didn't stay wild. Civilization was coming to the West by way of homesteaders and settlers. Westward expansion of the United States became a reality as folks from the East came seeking their own land and an opportunity for self-sufficiency, or even prosperity, for themselves and their families. This year the special study emphasis for our Western Knowledge Test will be on homesteading.

#### The Homestead Act

The History of the Homesteading Act and How It Changed the United States Forever  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOYKe2oH8IU> (video 3:24)

Growing Nation: The Homestead Act of 1862  
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-housingat250-article-091125.html>

Homesteading by the Numbers <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/bynumbers.htm>

#### Water Mills

Old Missouri Mills (**Article is available to view from button labeled "Old Missouri Mills" on the 4-H Western Heritage Project webpage under the button that led you to this document.**)

Types of Water Wheels <https://energyeducation.ca/encyclopedia/Waterwheel>

Pioneer Village Grist Mill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGlr78lWoc> (video 3:35)

Carding Mill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf1QjvYVGw> (video 2:57)

1700s Water Powered Sawmill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p8Sahtl6Q> (video 3:43)

#### Homesteading Life of Laura Ingalls Wilder

Daily Life on the Prairie  
<https://laurasprairiehouse.com/what-daily-life-was-really-like-on-the-prairie-during-laura-ingalls-wilders-time/>

**Laura Ingalls Wilder** biography:  
<https://www.mnhs.org/mnopedia/search/index/person/wilder-laura-ingalls-1867-1957>