**Unit 6: Reconstruction and an Expanding America (Reconstruction-1897)**

[Topic 2: Westward Expansion and the Homestead Act](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=06&topic=02)

Source 4, “Letter to the Thomas Family, July 5, 1874”

Uriah and Mattie Oblinger wrote this letter to their family about life on their Homestead farm.

Well Matt has waked up and comes to bother me she wants me to go to the truck patch with her. Well we have just come in from the truck patch and found the gophers had about cleaned the peas all off the vines they hull the peas out and leave the pods so it looks as though{Begin deleted text}t{End deleted text} they were full yet. our squash vines are full of bloom and watermelon too & we had cucumbers sliced for breakfast we brought in beets just now that measured 1 ft in circumference and potatoes almost as large as a goose egg our tomato vine are full of bloom so you see we will have enough to live on judging by present appearances our sweet corn is beginning to tassel and our little patch of cane looks splendid just step in this fall and see if we dont have enough of the substantial for any dutch family to eat.

well Matt wants the table for dinner. dinner and just come home from sabbath school but few were {Begin inserted text}out{End inserted text} some that attend were at a dance last night and of course feel too badly used up to go to sabbath school. there was a specil few of us there and only 3 families of us that make any profession at all and those that dont want to run the thing to suit themselves and are to contrary to listen to anything only their own will and you know that will not work but however we have hope that it will be different afterwhile. as there are so few regular in attendance it is hard to hit upon any regular routine of business each sunday consequently we will do the best we can. we are going to have a busy time now for awhile as some are going to commence cutting flax tomorrow and wheat or some of it will do by the middle of the week so you see hard work is upon us.

The twins have growed so much they are nice looking young women now The famly was inquireing about you wanted to know when you was comeing back told them thought you would be back afterwhile and bring a cook with you Annies husband has been sick ever since last harvest his name is Hunter you know they was here when the old folks come They think he has the con sumption it is a family complaint with his people he looks dreadful bad Doc if you dont come soon you will have to enquire the road from Sutton to our house and it does beat all the way Sutton has improved the Rusians have put up several large dwelling houses and several buisness houses and they have nice picket fences around their houses which helps the looks very much

**Emerging ESOL / Reader**

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Source 4, “Letter to the Thomas Family, July 5, 1874”

Uriah and Mattie Oblinger wrote this letter to their family about life on their Homestead farm.

Matt just woke up. She wants me to go to the small garden with her. Now we are back home. We saw that gophers ate all the peas. Our squash and watermelon plants are good. We had cucumbers for breakfast. Our beets are 12 inches around and the potatoes are as big as goose eggs. There are lots of tomatoes, too. We have lots of corn and some sugar cane. There is food for everyone.

1. What do they grow in the small garden?

They grow\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why are they telling the family about the garden?

They are telling the family about the garden because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Why was it important to grow a lot of food?

It was important to grow a lot of food because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Intermediate ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 6: Reconstruction and an Expanding America (Reconstruction-1897)**

[Topic 2: Westward Expansion and the Homestead Act](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=06&topic=02)

Source 4, “Letter to the Thomas Family, July 5, 1874”

Uriah and Mattie Oblinger wrote this letter to their family about life on their Homestead farm.

**Vocabulary**

* **flax -** a plant that can be made into cloth

Matt just woke up and came to bother me to take her to the garden. Now we are back and saw that gophers ate all the peas. We have lots of squash and watermelons, and we had cucumbers for breakfast. The beets are 12 inches around and the potatoes are the size of goose eggs. The tomato vine is full and our corn is starting to grow. We have sugar cane, too, that looks wonderful. You can see we have lots of good food to eat.

We just got home from Sunday School and Matt wants to get the table ready for dinner. At church, there were only three families that are serious like us. Everybody else just wants to do what they want. We hope it will get better after a while. There are not enough people for us to do any church business but we will try. Tomorrow we will start to cut the flax, and will cut the wheat in a few days. We will be very busy with lots of hard work.

1. What hard work do they have to do?

They have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why is the garden important?

The garden is important because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. What does the writer think about other people at church? Why?

The writer thinks other people at church are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Advanced ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 6: Reconstruction and an Expanding America (Reconstruction-1897)**

[Topic 2: Westward Expansion and the Homestead Act](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=06&topic=02)

Source 4, “Letter to the Thomas Family, July 5, 1874”

Uriah and Mattie Oblinger wrote this letter to their family about life on their Homestead farm.

**Vocabulary**

* **consumption** - a lung disease that makes your body waste away; tuberculosis/TB

Matt just woke up and came to bother me to take her to the garden. We have just come back and saw that the gophers ate most of the peas. The squash and watermelon vines are full, and we had cucumbers for breakfast. The beets are one foot around and the potatoes are as big as goose eggs. The tomato vines are full and the sweet corn is starting to grow. We have some sugar cane, too, that looks wonderful, so you see we have plenty of good food.

We just returned from Sunday School and Matt wants the table for dinner. There were not very many people at church because there was a dance last night and the people who went still feel bad from the party. It is hard to get any church work done because only three of us want to do what is right and everybody else just won’t listen. They will do only what they want. Every Sunday we try our best and hope it will improve over time. Tomorrow we will start to cut the flax, and will cut the wheat in the middle of the week. We are in the middle of very hard work.

The twins have grown and are now pretty young women. Everyone in the family wants to know when you will come back. I said you would return after a while, and that you would bring a cook with you. Annie’s husband, Hunter, is very sick. We think he has consumption. Lots of people in his family have had it. He looks terrible, Doc. The road from Sutton has improved a lot. You won’t recognize it when you come back, and will have to ask where we live. Russian people have put up some very large houses and businesses. They put picket fences around their houses so they look very nice.

1. Why weren’t there very many people at church on the day he wrote the letter?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. This letter tells about some troubles of the people near them. Who are they and what are their problems?

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1. What name does the writer use to the person getting the letter? What does this tell you about him and the reasons they want him to come back?

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| **BONUS** - Illustrate one part of this letter. Include labels and a caption using words that the writer used. |