

Making Connections to History & Culture at Lightly School

Understanding our history and culture—and the struggles of everyday life in the past—helps us appreciate the sacrifices and hard work of those who came before us. It also encourages us to recognize the many blessings we enjoy today. Throughout this unit, we were able to integrate several areas of the curriculum, including Social Studies, ELA, and Art.

To deepen our understanding, we began by sharpening our reading skills and examining historic visuals and to enhance our understanding and connections to what we already know about pioneer life. We reflected on the well-known motto early settlers lived by:

**“Eat it up,
Wear it out,
Make it do,
Or go without.”**

This simple but powerful phrase helped students recognize how much we can easily purchase today, compared to the resourcefulness and effort required to create everyday necessities in the past. We explored how children invented ways to pass the time and made our own version of a Jumping Jack.

This November, our school enjoyed an immersive and memorable trip to the **Mennonite Heritage Museum**. Students made meaningful connections to their own lives through shared history and traditions, while also exploring the many differences between life in the past and the modern world. They found these contrasts fascinating.

Exploring the sod house—and learning what it was like to live in it through all seasons—was especially eye-opening. Students were intrigued by the **Fraktur printing** in the schoolhouse and enjoyed comparing it to the writing in their German books. After visiting the flour mill, we may even have some baking in our near future!

One of the most impactful moments was seeing history and religion intersect through the statue of an **Anabaptist Martyr**, a figure familiar to many of our students. Experiencing this connection in such a vivid, tangible way made a lasting impression.

Our trip provided rich learning opportunities, meaningful curriculum connections, and a deeper appreciation of the people and traditions that shaped our community.



