

# The Farmerettes

How They Kept Ontario Growing During the War





**Literacy Resources for Students** 



# Included in this packet:

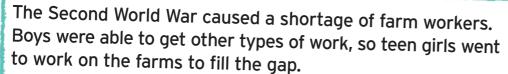
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#### Teen Heroes Who Fed Canada







#### Mary Gardner, 1944, 1945 Thedford

My unforgettable adventure as an Ontario Farmerette began one day in June 1944 at my Toronto collegiate. A very persuasive gentleman explained to us students that with our young men at war Ontario needed replacement workers for the orchards and farms. As Farmerettes, we would be committed to thirteen weeks of work wherever we were sent and as Farmerettes we would be excused from writing our grade thirteen final exams!!

So fired by pure patriotism, three classmates and I, complete strangers to agriculture, arrived for a season's work in Thedford Ontario. Our wardrobe consisted of brand new Levis. In the 1940's blue jeans were not an all-season all-occasion outfit, but strictly a uniform for work!

We worked in the onion bogs in ground baked by the sun to cement, on hands and knees, weeding.

Still, we accepted the luck of the draw cheerfully and faced the Farmerettes' challenges which were:

**Boredom** – We conquered it by telling each other in detail every movie we had ever seen as we crawled up and down the endless onion rows.

Raw knees – You would not believe what we used as knee-pads until our mothers in distant Toronto put aside their many League knitting projects to make us indestructible knee protectors.

The Clinging Aroma of Onions – We used every soap and lotion available with no success.

the science, the art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock.

We were paid, I think, twenty-five cents per hour

for a ten-hour day. From this sum we paid a small amount for room and board. Needless to say, we considered working as a Farmerette to be a wartime volunteer contribution.

But it was not all work. There was free time every evening for recreation – letter-writing, record playing (TV did not exist) and trips to town.

The benefits of Farmeretting were obvious – girls from all over the province met, worked together and made friends. Ontario's garden food supply was maintained, onions and all.



Excerpt from "Two Summers as a Farmerette" by Mary Gardener, A1996.89 Farmerettes: Wellington County Historical Society Essays, 1996, held at the Wellington County Museum and Archives."

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#### (onsider This!

How do you think you could help the country? Would you want to?

### Fast Fact

Over 30,000 girls, 16 - 18, became Farmerettes from 1941 - 1952. Most had never worked on a farm, but they learned to drive tractors, plant, harvest, and stook (cut and stack) wheat.







Name:	Date:
Comprehension and I	Inference
Read the essay Teen Heroes Who Fed	d Canada. Then answer each question.
Why was there a need for Farmerettes? (a	(as explained to Mary Gardner at her Toronto collegiat
What was the uniform given to the Fa	armerettes? How is their 'uniform' used today?
What benefits of being a Farmerette d	does Mary Gardner reference in her writing?







Name:	Date:
	"fired by true patriotism" to join the Farmerettes. What do statement? Has there ever been a time in your life that you xplain.
from writing her Grade 13 exa	s that by joining the Farmerette movement, she was excused ams. Do you think this was a reasonable offering to the young ement? Why or why not? Use details from the text and your nswer.







Name:	Date:
Making Connections	
•	knowledge you thing you have
What the text says:	My Connection:
What the text says:	My Connection:
What the text says:	→ My Connection:







Name:	Date: _	
Building Vocabu	lary	
	he bank below and fill in u!	that you may not use much. the chart. Use a dictionary egiate, recreation, bog
My Word:	Parts of Speech:	I have heard this before:
		Yes / No
Definition:		
My Words in a Sentence:		
My Word:	Parts of Speech:	I have heard this before:
iviy vvoid.	Parts of Speech.	Yes / No
Definition:		
My Words in a Sentence:		







N	ame:		Date:	<del> </del>
<b>\</b>	/lapping Fai	rmerette Fa	arms	
S	tudy the map of S	outhern Ontario v	vith coordinates and a	nswer the questions.
ln	structions:			
1.			ree coordinates that inc axis (horizontal) always	
2.			rdinates that include (I, 1 I) always comes first!	O). For example, (C,3).
3.		-	choice. List three coordi r that the X axis (horizoı	
4.	. Choose five differ colour and label yo		ms from the list. Using	the listed coordinates,
	Fenwick (E,4)	Oakville (E,5)	Thedford (B,4)	Huttonville (D,5)
	Kingsville (A,2)	Forest (B,4)	Grimsby (E,4)	Vineland (C,3)

#### **Bonus!**

The fruits, vegetables, and grains the Farmerettes harvested were all foods that will grow in Ontario's climate, geography and soil.

The Niagara Region (X,X) is good at growing fruit! Many of the farms that the Farmerettes worked on were in this region. Looking at your map, what geographic characteristics do you notice about the area that might contribute to this?







lame:	Date:	

## Map of Southwestern Ontario

