

LEVELED BOOK • L

Colonial Life



Written by Julie Harding • Illustrated by Maria Voris

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Step back more than three hundred years to when life was much different. Imagine a time before the United States was a country. It is a period known as the Colonial Times.

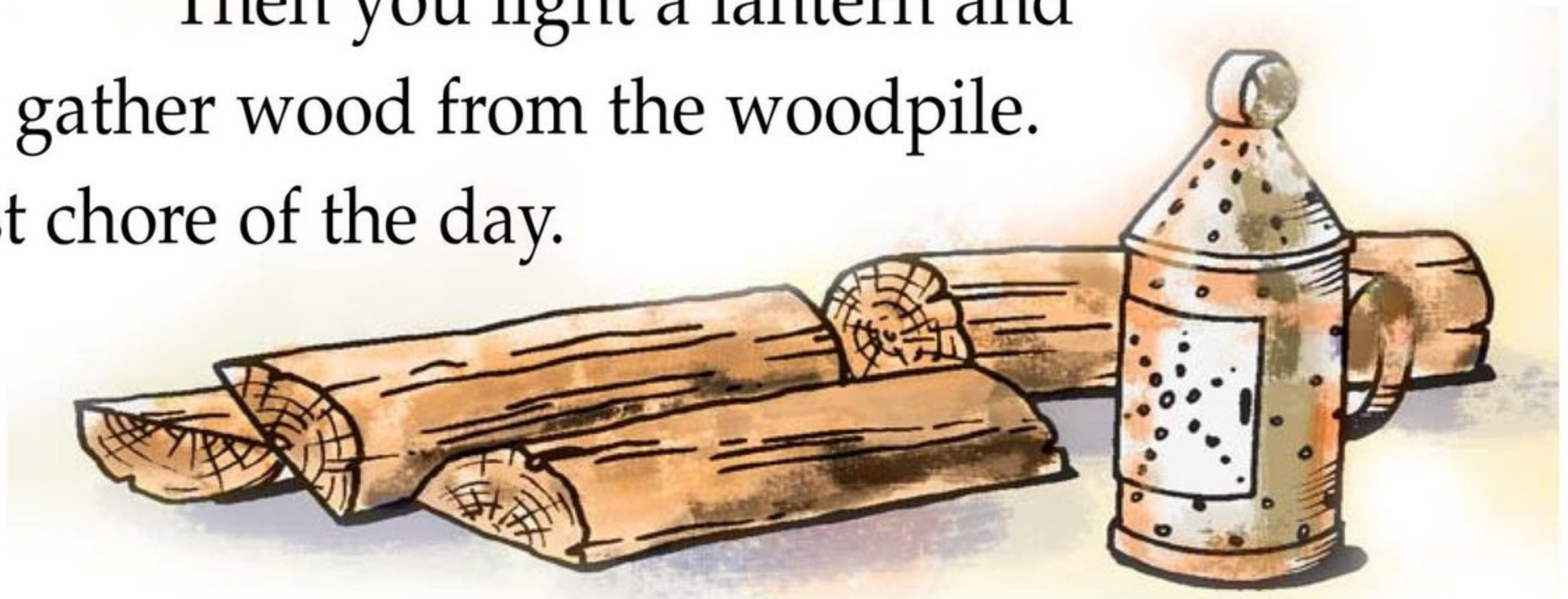
It is a cold morning. You wake up before the sun rises. You have much work to do. Only some lucky children get to go to school. Most kids spend their days working beside their parents.

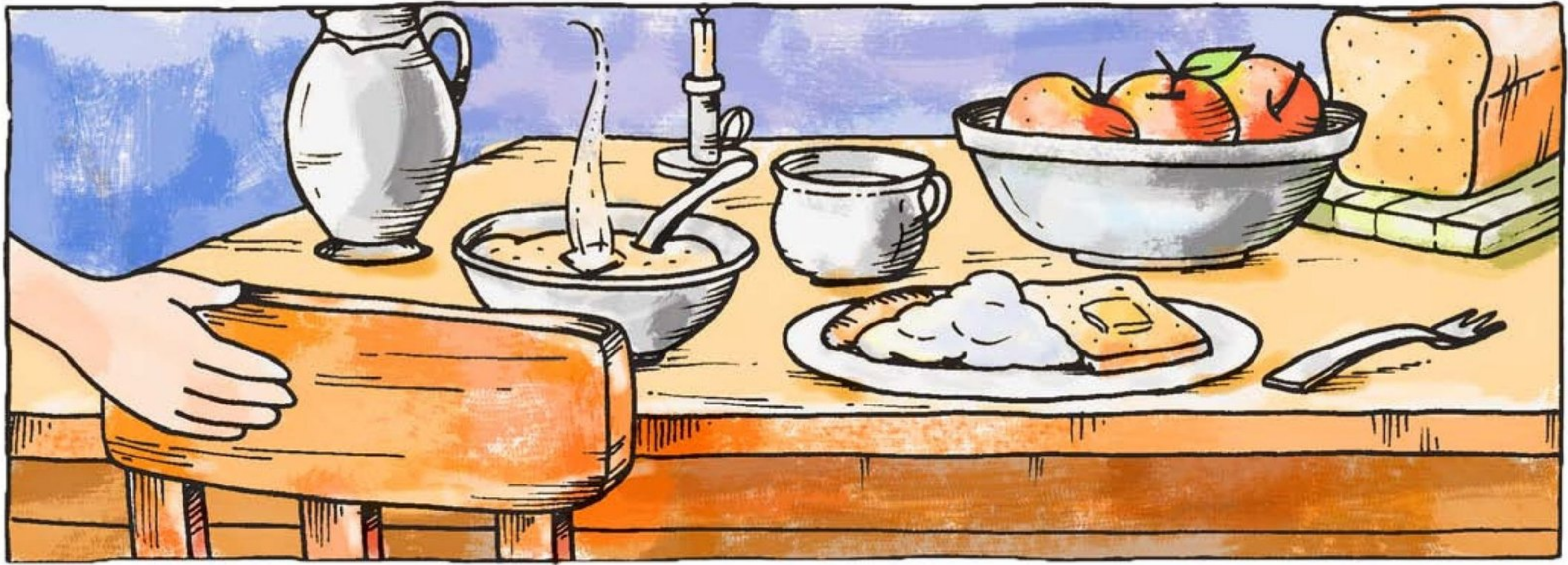




You begin the day by washing up in the washbasin and getting dressed. The water isn't hot unless your mother or father has already boiled some.

Then you light a lantern and walk outside to gather wood from the woodpile. This is your first chore of the day.





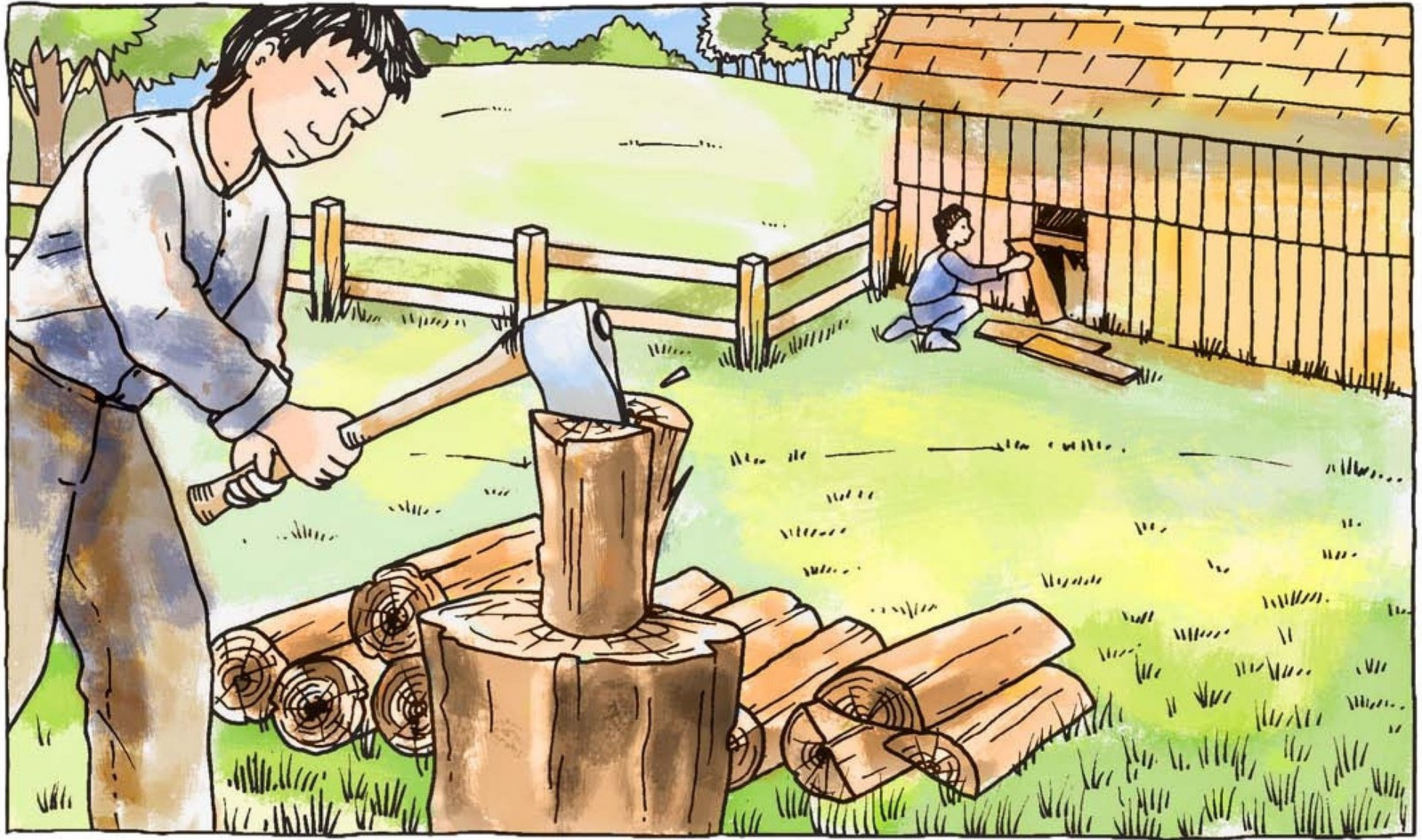
After you put the wood in the fireplace, a fire is lit to warm the house. Your mother uses the fire to cook breakfast. You soon sit down to a big breakfast. You need it because you have a day of hard work ahead of you.

If you are a girl, you probably have to help your mother cook, gather eggs from the chickens, or wash the laundry—by hand! You might also have to churn the butter. That means that you sit over a large wooden bucket full of cream. You grab a long, funny-shaped stick and gently move it up and down in the bucket. This churns the cream until it slowly turns to butter. The butter tastes good, but it takes many hours to make. Once you make it, you are not able to keep it for long. You see, there are no refrigerators in colonial days. You have to chill things in a stream—if you live near one.





If you are a boy, you might have to work on the farm. You plant seeds and till soil with a plow pulled by oxen. You might repair the barn, milk the cows, or chop down trees for wood. Some days, you might help to build a new neighbor's house or even work in the local mill. You have to work many hours both in the cold of winter and in the heat of summer. There is no air conditioning in the summer. In the winter, you have only a fireplace to keep warm.





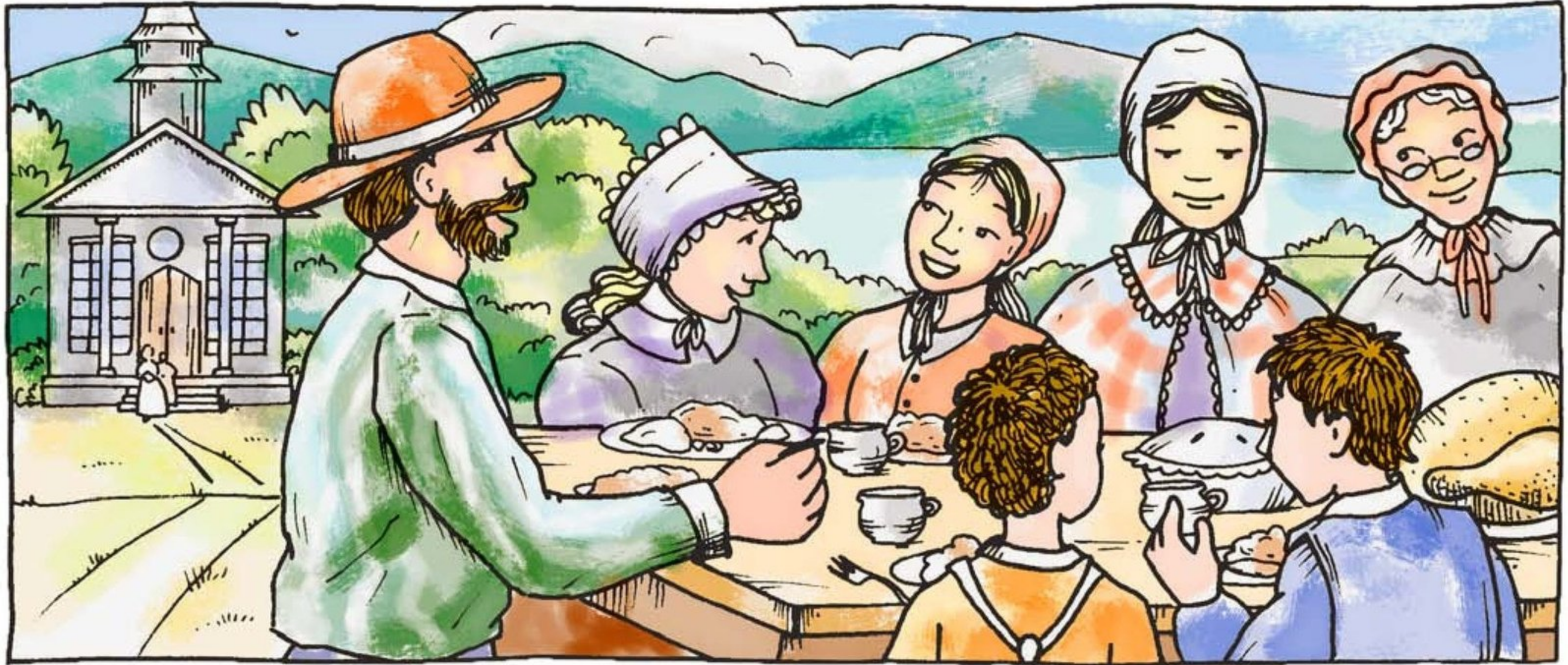
You might come from a well-off family and attend school in a small, one-room schoolhouse. The classroom is filled with children of every age. One teacher has to teach all of the children. The subjects that you study are similar to what students learn in school today—math, reading, and writing. You do not study science.



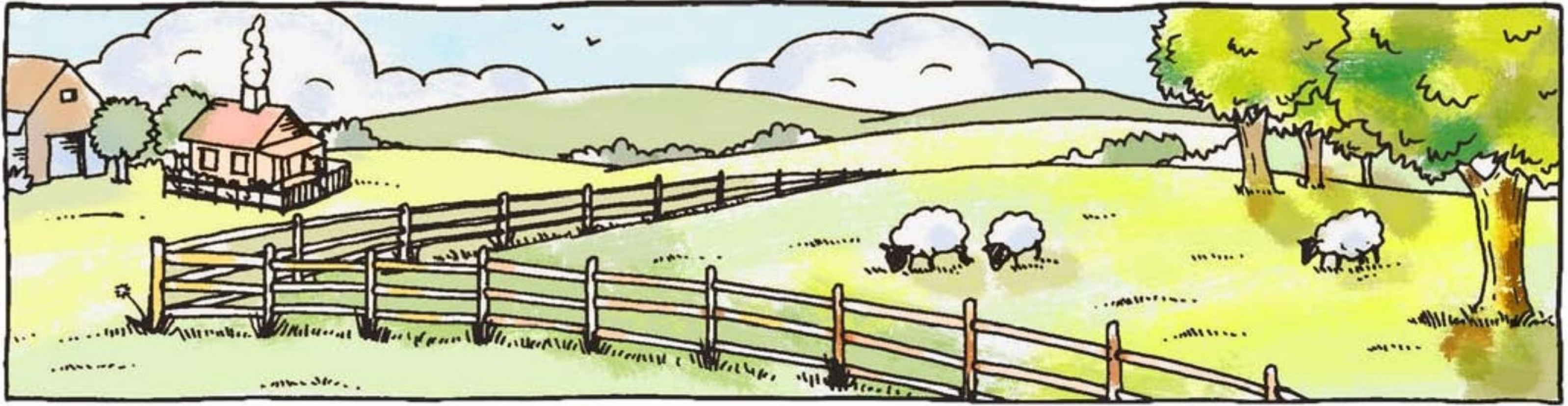
You may be wondering if you have time for fun. The truth is that you spend most of your time working. In colonial days, there are no televisions to watch and no video games to play. You don't even have electricity.

If you don't go to school, you probably don't read.
So reading a good book is not something you do for fun.
Since people live far apart from each other, you don't
have friends nearby. If you want to play with your friends,
you don't have a bicycle to ride
to their houses. Your parents
don't have a car to take you,
either. You have to ride a horse
or walk a mile or more. But
most families are large. You
probably have many brothers
and sisters to play with.





On Sundays, children go to church with their families. This is a good day to play with your friends who also go to church. You might have picnics with other families in the afternoon.



Life in Colonial Times was much different from life today. It was a much harder life. People did not live long because there were no medicines or hospitals. But colonial life was also good in many ways. The air and water were much cleaner. There was not much traffic or noise.

Do you think you would like to have lived then?

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Level L Leveled Book
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