

TALKING MACHINES

Talking Machines Education Resource

Theme: People

Film Title- A Life on the Farm: June Gray (Tumbarumba Pioneer Women's Hut)

About the Clip:

Synopsis:

As a child June helped her father muster stock, chopped wood and helped out around their isolated farm. At 15 years of age, June met her husband and married young. She moved back to the land and was expected to work hard – digging potatoes and carting wood amongst other duties. June speaks of the role of women in days gone by, their contribution to life on the land which often remains unacknowledged and the heartbreak of losing her first child.

Warning- Film content may be confrontational for some students.

Duration: 11.45 minutes

Study Module:

Curriculum Focus: History – NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

Year: 9 (Stage 5)

Strand: Historical knowledge and understanding; Historical inquiry and skills

Theme:

- Depth Study 1: Making a Better World? – The Industrial Revolution (1750 – 1914)
- Depth Study 2: Australia and Asia – Making a Nation

Key Concepts:

- Evidence; continuity and change; cause and effect; perspectives; significance

Curriculum Applicability:

- The technological innovations that led to the Industrial Revolution (**ACDSEH017**)
- The nature and significance of the Industrial Revolution and how it affected living and working conditions, including within Australia (**ACOKFH016**)
- The experiences of men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution, and their changing way of life (**ACDSEH081**)
- Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900) (**ACDSEH090**)

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Historical Skills:

- **Chronology, terms and concepts**
 - Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places (**ACHHS164**)
- **Analysis and use of sources**
 - Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources (**ACHHS169**)
 - Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources (**ACHHS171**)
- **Perspectives and interpretations**
 - Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past (**ACHHS172**)
 - Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) (**ACHHS173**)
- **Explanation and communication**
 - Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced (**ACHHS174**)

General capabilities:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking**
 - Developing questions about aspects of the past that require historical argument
 - Identify and clarify information and ideas
 - Organise and process information
- **Personal and Social Capability – social awareness:**
 - Appreciate diverse perspectives

Context/ Background Information:

Throughout the 19th century and much of the 20th century women living and working on Australian farms were little acknowledged for their contribution. Often they physically helped their husbands to clear the land and build the house. Women looked after milking the cows, separating the cream and churning the butter. Poultry were raised for eggs with the help of small incubators and both butter and milk were sold at the local store to buy small luxuries.

Talking Machines: reviving Riverina rural technology collections with video testimonies, captures the histories and stories of generations of Australian men and women who farmed the Riverina, through the rusted metal frames and once sharp blades of dormant farm machinery they used.

The project creates a series of thematic trails across the Riverina and key objects have been selected to support the development of these themes which in turn speak to Australia's role in the industrial revolution- this is the focus of an educational resource. Australia's role in the industrial revolution and the impact of the revolution is little documented in Australian education resources- these films provide an access point for teachers on examples of the impact of the revolution upon rural Australian society.

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Discussion Pointers:

- Environment/place can be an important element of identity. Is this the case with the person in the video? Explain the reasons for your response.
- How does this film contest the standard image of the pioneer's wife/farmer's wife? Consider the way that primary sources can change/challenge popular beliefs of roles and responsibilities (e.g. women as helpers on the farm, happy jam makers).
- Is there a hidden story here around women's contribution to farm labour/productivity? What is not shown?

Suggested Classroom Activities:

- Undertake interviews with older community members and discover how life has changed with new technologies- try chatting with grandparents or people in your local retirement village.
- Role play – how would you manage given this scenario? (no electricity, no refrigeration, etc. find out when these services became available in your community)
- Write a series of diary entries from the perspective of June or her sister which outlines her experiences of growing up on a property.
- Take a site visit to the Pioneer Women's Hut – look at the collections and archive and discuss in the light of this film.

More Information, Contact Details & Arrangements for Visits

The Pioneer Women's Hut is located near Tumbarumba and is open as follows-

- Wednesdays 11.00 am - 4.00pm
- Saturdays and Sundays 10.00 am - 4.00 pm
- Most Public Holidays 10.00am - 4.00 pm

Or at other times by arrangement.

For further information, please contact the Pioneer Women's Hut Tour Coordinator on (02) 6948 2923 or email tourcoordinator@outlook.com. Alternately, contact the Tumbarumba Visitor Information Centre on 02 6948 3333.

You will find information on the web at:

<http://www.pioneerwomenshut.com/> or <https://mgnsw.org.au/organisations/pioneer-womens-hut/>.