

## Along the Wilderness Road Try-It



Wilderness Road Council

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### Along the Wilderness Road Our Own Council Brownie Girl Scout Try It

On March 10, 1773 about 30 men led by Daniel Boone left Tennessee to settle the wilderness of Kentucky. This group's purpose was to mark a path from the starting point to the settlement site at Fort Boonesboro. They passed through the Cumberland Gap. Whenever possible the men traveled along Indian paths and buffalo trails. When necessary, they chopped passages through the forest and cane-breaks. By April 1, 1773, when they reached Boonesboro, they had marked what would be known as the Wilderness Trail. The trail was a rough, crude passage, and in places only a barely cleared path marked by axe blazes on trees.



Over the next few decades the Wilderness Trail became a useful route for thousands of settlers coming into Kentucky. For years it remained only wide enough for foot and horse traffic for most of its length. The Wilderness Road was created by an act of the Kentucky Legislature November 1795. By 1796, a few years after Kentucky become the 15th state, the Kentucky portion of the route was widened to allow wagon traffic.

Construction of the Wilderness Road led to an increase in commerce between the new commonwealth and all the country to the east and south. Its opening marked the beginning of peaceful passage through the wilderness.

**Choose Four Activities To Complete.**

## 1. Life in the Wilderness

Early pioneers endured many hardships trying to tame a wild country. Life is much different today than it was 200 years ago. Brownie Girl Scout troops should talk about what a pioneer child's life was like. Leaders should talk about feelings of hunger and cold, of working hard from dawn to dusk, or sleeping on the hard ground.

Challenge the girls to make a list of items that pioneer families used to live in their small cabins. Then list the conveniences we have today that sometimes girls take for granted.

Examples:

candles - electric lights  
outhouses - modern bathroom  
ice house - refrigerator  
fireplace - heating system  
fireplace - stove

## 2. Pioneer Forts

The first permanent settlement in Kentucky was Fort Harrod in 1774. Two living history museums are located at Fort Harrod in Harrodsburg and Fort Boonesboro in Richmond. They are pioneer forts that have been reconstructed. First - person interpreters carry on the roles of historical pioneers in costume, dialect and activities.

Visit an historic living history museum, historical home or an historical site. Check with Along Wilderness Road - Council Guide to History and Heritage Resources for available sites near the troop.

## 3. Dried Apple Rings

Fertile land and mild climate drew farmers to Kentucky. Corn, grain and livestock were the mainstays of these yeoman farmers. To survive the long winter months the settlers had to preserve food for storage. They learned to smoke, salt, can, freeze and dry foods. Native fruits like apples were dried to preserve them.

Plan an apple picking afternoon and follow the steps to dry apples.

1. Wash and dry apples.
2. Using a vegetable peeler, peel the skin off apples.
3. Cut each apple into 1/4" slices. Point out the star made by the apple seeds.
4. Cut around center to remove seeds and create apple rings.
5. Cut a 36" length of dental floss and string the rings about 2" apart on the floss so air can circulate. The apples should not touch.
6. Hang the rings in a warm, dry, airy place. It may take from a few days to two weeks to dry the apples.

## 4. Corn Bread

**Corn, an early Kentucky crop, was versatile and easy to grow, harvest and store. As food, corn was ground into meal and made into bread. Pioneer Journey Cakes were an important food item for the early settlers when they traveled. They were filling and tasted good. Why were they called Pioneer Journey Cakes?**

#### **Pioneer Journey Cakes**

**4 tablespoons of water**

**1 & 1/2 cups of yellow cornmeal**

**1/2 teaspoon of salt**

**1 tablespoon of melted butter**

**Pour water over cornmeal and stir. Add the salt and butter. Mix well. Grease the bottom of an iron skillet. Set skillet on the top of red coals or on the burner of a stove. Pour batter into the hot skillet, forming 4" size corn cakes. Turn when edges turn light brown and begin to bubble up.**

### **5. Hunting**

**Buffalo, deer and beaver attracted fur trappers to Kentucky in the 1760's. These animals provided an income, meat, clothing, cutting tools, etc.**

**Look through magazines and ask girls to cut out a wide variety of animals. Talk about wild animals and domesticated animals. Ask girls to classify the animals into these two groups. Girls may also make mobile, that show "layers" of animals - in the sea, on land and in the air.**

### **6. Husk Dolls**

**The notion of a regular playtime was not part of the pioneer's way of thinking, but children were allowed to have some playthings. Corn husks were used to make dolls.**

**Soak the dried corn husks in a pan of warm water for 30 minutes and then dry off. Follow these steps to make the dolls.**

- 1. Fold several long strong husks in half and wrap a length of raffia or string close to the fold to make a head.**
- 2. Insert two smaller husks between the folded husks for arms. Wrap raffia below the arms to form a waist and also near the ends of the arms.**
- 3. Give the doll either a long dress or two legs by shaping the husks below the waist. If making legs, tie raffia near ends of legs.**
- 4. Facial details can be added with colored markers. Glue some corn silk on the head for hair.**

### **7. Patchwork and Quilting**

**Patchwork is the only uniquely American form of needlework. The smallest scrap of cloth became precious when women had to wait until flax was harvested or wool sheared before it was spun, woven and sewn. Therefore, women saved every scrap of cloth and assembled them into usable -size pieces. Quilting is stitching a design through several layers of cloth.**

**Materials:**

**cloth  
pins  
cotton stuffing  
needle  
thread**

- 1. Cut 2 squares 7"x7" from brightly patterned cotton.**
- 2. Place layer of cotton stuffing between material and pin together.**
- 3. Bend the edges with bias tape, forming a loop at one corner to hang.**
- 4. Sew binding on and stitch from one diagonal to the other to quilt.**

## **8. Make a Sampler**

**Sewing skills were vital to pioneer women since making and repairing clothes for the family was her duty. One way young girls learned to sew was by stitching a picture that used the cross, feather, blind and back stitches. A "Sampler" displaying their needlework skills was completed by most girls when they were eight or nine years old.**

### **Materials:**

**size 6 or 7 crewel needles  
cotton embroidery floss  
fabric (cotton, linen, waffle pique, checked gingham)  
embroidery hoops**

### **General Method**

- 1. Thread needle with 2 or 3 strands of floss separated from the six-strand hank.**
- 2. Bring needle up at lower corner of cross and insert needle at opposite upper corner forming a diagonal stitch.**
- 3. Complete row with these diagonals.**
- 4. Work back across row completing cross-stitches with the other diagonal.**

**Make "embroidery hoops" from a bowl such as a soft margarine container. Cut off 1/2" of the top of the plastic bowl including the rim and cut the center from the matching lid leaving a 1/2" rim. Use as hoops.**