

Along the Wilderness Road Interest Project Patch



Wilderness Road Council

**Along the Wilderness Road
Our Own Council
Cadette and Senior Girl Scout
Interest Project Patch**

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 which was Ft. Boonesboro. They passed through 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 increased 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.

Skill Builders

1. Cumberland Gap is perhaps the best known mountain pass in America. Buffalo were the

first to find the gap and trample out a path connecting their favorite salt licks with grazing lands. How did pioneers interact with the physical environment to meet their needs in the wilderness?

2. Foodway is the term for ideas and customs about food that people acquire without formal written recipes or training. Corn was an early pioneer crop because it was easily raised and stored. Pork was a common meat because hogs readily adapted to Kentucky's Oak forests. Research, plan and prepare a pioneer meal for family, friends or troop.

3. Pioneers had only a small wardrobe and clothes were worn until they gave out. Items that were no longer useful were cut into patches, rags or woven into rugs. Research and create a pioneer outfit from underwear to top coat for a man or woman.

4. Spinning, dying and weaving were essential tasks for pioneer women. Choose a natural dye source and color wool or cotton yarn. Weave into book marks or friendship bracelets.

5. Doing the laundry was an all day affair. Clothes had to be sorted, soaked, rubbed, bleached, rinsed and hung to dry. An average family did their wash once a week. A liquid lye soap was the detergent for most of the wash. Make lye soap. Research special stain removers used to remove tough stains.

6. Natural folk medicines use herbs and foods that have particular medicinal qualities. The medicinal use of plants was discovered by watching what plants animals ate when they were sick. People used folk medicine because there were not very many trained doctors available. Research and demonstrate a folk remedy using herbs and plants.

7. Candles provided light and were made from native materials such as beeswax or tallow. Most candles were dipped because they required no special skills. Learn to make candles for a special occasion.

Technology

1. Early pioneers endured many hardships trying to tame a wild country. Life is much different today than it was 200 years ago. Make a list of items that pioneer families used every day. Compare and contrast these items with the technology of today.

2. Gather information about historical sites in your area. Put together a directory of resources and services available to visit and use to study history.

3. Surf the net and find out which historical organizations are represented by web pages. Do a web search for travel destinations, vacations, programs and events that have to do with pioneer history and life styles.

Service Projects

1. Locate a local historical site such as a famous home, grist mill, log cabin, old cemetery, covered bridge or museum. Volunteer a couple of hours a week for approximately one month. Help with the archives, preservation of materials, maintenance or other tasks.

2. Participate in an oral history project. Compile a taped history of pioneer stories that are remembered by older adults in your community.

3. The notion of a regular playtime was not part of the pioneers way of thinking, but children were allowed to have some play things. Organize a Brownie Fun Day where girls would learn pioneer games and make pioneer toys.

4. Patchwork is the only uniquely American form of needlework. The smallest scraps 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 useable-sized pieces. Quilting is stitching a design through served layers of cloth.

Locate a community quilting group and organize a quilt show - displaying the quilts at a church or community center. Or learn to quilt and make a baby quilt to donate to an agency that provides baby items to young mothers.

5. Host a folk music concert for your community. Contact local folk singers and musicians. Find a park or community center to hold the concert. Advertise and invite friends, family and neighbors.

Career Exploration

1. Interview someone who works as a living history guide or someone who works with historic sites in your local community. What training, if any, did she need to be able to do her job.

2. Identify pioneer women who made a difference during the early history of our region. Women were the picture of diversity including: farmers, nurses, soldiers, slaves, craftswomen, homemakers, mothers, etc. Create a collage exhibiting the lives of famous pioneer women in your community.

3. Shadow an antiques store owner or flea market dealer for an afternoon. Find out about primitive collectibles. Find out what makes a piece of furniture, art or jewelry valuable and how items are appraised.

4. Visit the Kentucky archives section of your community library. How are valuable books and manuscripts stored and preserved?

5. Identify two colleges that offer programs in historical studies such as physical anthropology, historical archaeology, folk life studies, American history, etc. Research what courses are offered, what degrees are offered and what special careers this training would benefit.