

Cabin Adventure

THEME

The cabin was built in a time and manner shaped by its moment in history and the needs and resources of the people who built it. As science and technology developed, the life of people changed.

TIMELINE

- 1492 Columbus discovers America.
- 1776 America declares independence.
- 1797 Liberty is settled.
- 1805 Indian Land at end of Dry Creek opens for settlement.
- >1805 Cabin built sometime after this date and before 1830.
- 1838 Cherokee Removal (Trail of Tears).
- 1960's Butternut Valley deserted.
- 1947 Electricity on Dry Creek.

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

Cabin and display

INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself and state the title of the activity. Preview the main points of the activity and give students an idea of what they will be doing. Conversationally state the theme and sub themes. Ask: **What is history?** Explain they are living in what will be history. Review the timeline so students can place the cabin in an historical perspective. Tell them to forget what is normal in their life (cell phones, computers, electricity, motors) and imagine the life of the people who lived in this cabin. Ask: **What do all human beings need to live** (food, shelter, clothing, water)? **Where did pioneers get these things** (pioneers had no stores and, at first, no neighbors to borrow anything)? Discuss how pioneers had to supply or make everything. Ask: **If someone offered you a new, modern house, would you move?** Explain that only the oldest buildings from 1797 to early 1800's are made of log. Houses were then made of stud and wood planks. As technology improved, people began using engines to run saw mills, which made cut lumber available for building. Nails also became available. In the early 1800's nails had to be hand made by a blacksmith so they were very expensive. Log homes needed no nails.

ACTIVITY

The population of Dekalb County in 1860 was 10,573 with 17% African American. By 1900 the population was 16,460 with less than 7% African American. By 1960 the county population shrank to 10,774. Ask: **What caused these changes?** Explain that the Civil War (1861-1865) changed the status of African American and the Southern economy. Many African Americans and Caucasians as

Teacher's Corner

Grade Level(s)

6th, 7th, and 8th

Time

60 minutes

Learning Expectation(s)

- 1.01 Understand the nature and complexity of culture.
- 1.03 Appreciate the relationship between physical environments and culture.
- 1.04 Recognize how cultural and individual perceptions affect places and regions.
- 1.05 Understand the role that diverse cultures and historical experiences had on the development of the world.
- 1.06 Understand the influence of science and technology on the development of culture through time.

State Performance Indicators (SPIs)

- Recognize the basic components of culture
- Recognize reasons that cultural groups develop or settle in specific physical environments.
- Recognize cultural definitions.
- Identify cultures that contributed to the development of the United States.
- Recognize the influence of science and technology on the development of early American colonial cultures.

Cabin Adventure

ACTIVITY (cont.)

well, left to find better jobs in the North (Industrial Revolution) and the West.

Many of the hollows (hollers) and valleys were largely depopulated by the 1950's. Ask: **Why?**

- Valleys were settled first due to fertile soil and access to water. Subsistence farming (when farmers grow only enough to feed their family) was no longer viable and only the flat lands allowed large scale, cash crops. This only became possible when chemical fertilizers became available since the plateau flat lands were poor soil known as the Barrens.
- The TVA began electrifying the South in 1930's. This brought good paying jobs and electricity to the people. Electricity did not reach Dry Creek until 1947.
- The first shirt factory opened up in Smithville in the 1950's. If you lived in a valley, you had roads that ran through creeks and could be blocked after a rain. Driving a car and getting to work would be difficult. Not until the 1951 was the telephone co-op formed and first serviced the towns.

Just like people in modern times want the newest cell phone, TV, or video game, the people back then wanted modern conveniences, such as electricity to run a refrigerator and light bulb. This meant they needed cash and that could not be earned on a "holler" farm. Additionally, electricity and phones did arrive in the valleys for decades after it made it in the towns. Many people moved to where life was easier.

Current Times: DeKalb's population is growing every year as people move back into the country. Just as technology allowed people to leave the "hollers" so that they could have a modern life, now technology allows people to move back. Telephone, electricity, internet, mail, deliveries, TV are all available even in the remote valleys here. People can have the best of both worlds, country living and modern life.

Bring the group back together for the discussion.

DISCUSSION

Technology is great but fragile. Ask: **Where does your electricity in your home come from and how does it get to your house?** It only takes a fallen tree to shut off your electricity. Major natural disasters, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, or ice storms can shut down electricity for weeks. It is good to know about life before electricity to help during tough circumstances.

WRAP-UP

Let the group know that the activity is coming to an end. Conversationally review the theme and sub themes. Give the teachers any of the materials that students are able to take home with them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Activity developed by Helga Thompson; April 2008.