Home on the Arkansas Range:

Homes of the Early Arkansas Pioneers

Students Learning from Local and Statewide Historic Places, Grades K-4

Allen Haley Homestead of Searcy County, 1904.
Photo by C. L. Castle, courtesy of Ouachita National Forest and Ouachita Baptist University Archives.

Originally Written by Rachel Miller, 2011
Updated by Shelle Stormoe, 2016, for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
1000 La Harpe Little Rock, AR 72201 | Phone: 501-324-9880 | Fax: 501-324-9184 | TDD: 501-324-9811
Arkansaspreservation.com | educationoutreach@arkansasheritage.org | info@arkansasheritage.org

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

An Agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage

Contents

Instructional Strategies

Grade Levels
K-4

Essential Question
How was Arkansas settled?

Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks

Visual Arts

CR.1.4.3 Investigate man-made environments (e.g., airports, parks, transportation systems, towns) as inspiration for works of art.

Geography
G.10.1.1 Explain ways people use natural resources in the community in which they choose to settle.
G.10.2.3 Identify diverse groups that have come to Arkansas and where they settled.

History
H.12.K.3 Compare a child's life of the present to that of the past using visual representations (e.g., growing food, rules and laws, making clothing, transportation, communication).
H.12.2.3 Compare life in your community past and present using maps, photographs, news stories, artifacts, or interviews (e.g. transportation, communication, recreation, jobs, housing).

Economics
E.6.1.1 Classify exchanges as monetary or barter.
E.6.3.1 Explain functions and characteristics of money in the United States.
E.6.4.1 Compare methods of exchange in the United States and around the world.
E.7.K.1 Discuss why people trade goods and services.
E.7.1.1 Identify goods and services that are traded.

Lesson Objective

Students will use primary and secondary sources to learn why and how Arkansas was settled (including the Louisiana Purchase, Trail of Tears, Land Runs, and Homestead Act of 1862) and what life was like for pioneers.

Materials/Resources

Copies of "A Brief History of the Settlement of Arkansas," "Letters from an Arkansas Pioneer," "Reminiscences of an Arkansas Pioneer," and "Land Runs and Homestead Act

of 1862;" Images of vernacular structures; newspaper, glue, scissors, rulers, and tape for Log Cabin Construction Activity

Introduction/Focus

Arkansas has a diverse architectural history. To truly understand the evolution of the built environment in our state, students should learn about the first structures of the pioneers. The early vernacular architecture of Arkansas is a perfect teaching tool for educators. By studying and utilizing early structures, students can learn about early travel to the state; how settlements developed and prospered; how pioneer homes were built, immigration, ways of life for the pioneers, and ultimately, how Arkansas became the state that it is.

Instructional Strategies

- Have students watch the short video "Home on the Arkansas Range" on Youtube. The video can be found here: https://youtu.be/zQ451FPdvo4. If you prefer a hard copy, e-mail educationoutreach@arkansasheritage.org to request a free copy.
- Instruct 3rd/4th grade students to read the "A Brief History of the Settlement of Arkansas" section, afterwards have students study the glossary and answer reading questions. (You may read younger students this section or share an age-appropriate picture book)
- Instruct students to read individually or aloud as a group the "Letter from an Arkansas Pioneer." Discuss the contents of the letter, after discussion, have students participate in the "Arkansas Trading Post" activity.
- Students can either read individually or read aloud as a group the "Reminiscences of an Arkansas Pioneer," and then discuss.
- Discuss the Trail of Tears and land runs and then have students complete the two listed activities.
- Discuss the Homestead Act of 1862; afterwards students can participate in either listed activity.
- Use the "Arkansas Log Cabin" section to introduce log cabin construction.
- Use the procedures and photographs in the "Building of a Pioneer Home" section to illustrate and instruct students on log cabin construction.

Enrichment/Differentiation

- Have students build their own log cabin with the "Log Cabin Construction Activity."
- Show images from this document to instruct students on various types of log cabins and other forms of vernacular architecture present in Arkansas.

Other Resources

- Your local county or town museum is a great resource for primary sources. They usually have a lot of historic photographs and artifacts that can be used to teach students about the early days of their community.

- The Scott Plantation Settlement in Scott, Arkansas, offers tours for students of their settlement made up of historic structures (501-351-5737 or www.scottconnections.org), as well as the Parker Pioneer Homestead in Harrisburg, Arkansas (www.parkerhomestead.com).
- The Ozark Folk Center in Mountain Home, Arkansas, has excellent workshops for students on pioneer folk arts and crafts, pioneer music, pioneer gardens and much more (870-269-3851 or www.ozarkfolkcenter.com).

- The Delta Cultural Center in Helena, Arkansas, has great exhibits on early settlements of the Delta region of Arkansas, and free resources for teachers to use in the classroom (800- 358-0972 or www.deltaculturalcenter.com).

- While you're down in the Delta, check out the Lakeport Plantation Museum; it's a wonderful introduction to early plantation life in southeast Arkansas (870-265-6031 or www.lakeport.astate.edu).

- The Historic Arkansas Museum has a pioneer activity trunk available for reservation and guided tours for students featuring pioneer-focused activities (501-324-9351 or www.historicarkansas.org).
- Visit the AHPP website to find out what historic properties are in your area: www.arkansaspreservation.com Click on the properties tab and then click on National Register of Historic Places, then click the link titled "Search the National Register Listings in Arkansas." To search the database by county, town or property name, enter what type of structure you're looking for in the description box; for example, by typing "dog-trot" in the box, it would bring up dog-trot cabins listed on the National Register. You can also search by county, or the historical name of the property.

- Arkansas Humanities Council has documentaries that are available to be checked out. Search the titles within its resource center: www.arkansashumanitiescouncil.org/resource-center/

- The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies is another archive available for teachers to search for primary and secondary sources pertaining to pioneer life and homes in Arkansas: www.butlercenter.org.

- The Encyclopedia of Arkansas has a searchable database of entries pertaining to various Arkansas related topics, including early Arkansas exploration and settlements: www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

- The DVD, *Alone in the Wilderness,* gives a detailed account of the traditional way of constructing one room log cabins: www.aloneinthewilderness.com.

Books

Several Arkansas authors have written books specifically on Arkansas pioneers. Most Arkansas libraries can do inter-library loan from the Central Arkansas Library System. You can search their catalog at www.cals.lib.ar.us. A keyword search on "pioneer" and "homesteader" will bring up over 100 titles.

Below are some suggested titles:

- *Daily Life in A Covered Wagon* by Paul Erickson
- *Children of the West: Family Life on the Frontier* by Cathy Luchetti
- *Children of the Wild West* by Russell Freedman
- *Pioneer Days: Discovering the Past with Fun Projects, Games, Activities, and Recipes* by David C. King
- *A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of A Pioneer Family in 1840* by Barbara Greenwood

A Brief History of the Settlement of Arkansas

The **exploration** and **settlement** of Arkansas dates back to more than 400 years ago. In the 1540s, the Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto led an **expedition** into the area west of the Mississippi River, which eventually became the state of Arkansas. De Soto and his men set-up camp at various locations along the Mississippi River and sometimes ventured farther inland, leaving their mark on the land and influence on its native population to be discovered hundreds of years later by **archeologists**.

A hundred years after De Soto's expedition, French explorers came to the area, establishing trading posts along the Mississippi River, the Arkansas River and the White River. One of those posts became very important to Arkansas. The **Arkansas Post** became the first European settlement in Arkansas. It served as the **seat of government**, **trading outpost** and **military post** for the French and Spanish living in Arkansas.

In the early 1800s, the small groups of settlers living in Arkansas were European and some African **slaves**, but that would all change after 1803. The area that is now Arkansas was part of the largest land **acquisition** in American history, the Louisiana Purchase. The territory was originally owned by the Spanish, and then by the French, but on December 20, 1803, the United States purchased more than 800,000 square miles from France for 15 million dollars. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States, opening the new territory to those living in the **Thirteen Colonies**.

Twelve states were eventually formed out of the land acquisition: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. All **surveys** of land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase began at the **junction** of Monroe, Lee and Phillips counties in eastern Arkansas in 1815. The site is now a **National Historic Landmark**. The L'Anguille Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Marianna, Arkansas, erected a granite monument on the survey point in 1926. The monument still stands today.*

Settlers slowly began to move into Arkansas after the Louisiana Purchase. The land that is now Arkansas was originally a part of the Missouri Territory. It wasn't until 1819 that Arkansas became its own **territory**, and two years later, the territorial **capital** was moved from the Arkansas Post to the growing town of Little Rock.

The new territory promised **prosperity.** The many rivers, thick forests and **abundant** wildlife attracted the pioneers to Arkansas; however, it also created great obstacles for entry into the state. The area around the Mississippi River was very swampy, the Ozark Mountains were hard to cross in heavy wagons; the settlement of Arkansas was slow. Many early pioneers utilized the already established Native American hunting trails into the state. One of the first "roads" in Arkansas was the Southwest Trail, but it was often hard to use because of the rough terrain.
The early pioneers that did venture into the territory would choose a settlement location with a nearby water source, probably a stream, a river or a lake. The closer the water the better because the pioneers had to carry the water themselves to their homes for drinking, cooking and washing. Since it was a lot of work to carry water to the home, the pioneers did not bathe as often as we do today. Sometimes, they only bathed on Sundays for church. If the family was able to locate

water underneath their land, they would dig a water well close to the cabin, and this would make it easier to bathe and clean clothes.

In an early Arkansas settlement, you might find a gristmill (corn mill) or a sawmill. A gristmill is a building where corn is ground into flour. The mill would either be powered by water, wind or livestock (animals). The flour would be used to make bread. If the settlement was a big one, a sawmill might be built to help cut the timber (wood) into logs for new buildings. A lot of times, the pioneers would have to cut and prepare timber themselves. On a large settlement, you might also find a blacksmith, a tanner, or even a shopkeeper. A blacksmith is a person who is trained to work with metal. The blacksmith would make the horse shoes for the pioneers' horses or knives to be used during hunting. Many early Arkansas slaves were trained blacksmiths. A tanner would prepare the skins of animals to be used as shoes, boots, moccasins, jackets, breeches (pants), saddles, saddle bags and saddle harnesses. As for shopkeepers, there weren't too many stores in the Arkansas Territory. If there were any stores, they were called trading posts and were probably found at the Arkansas Post.* The Arkansas Post began as a small trading post, but it grew into a large settlement that included all these things, as well as a **printing press**. Arkansas's first newspaper, the *Arkansas Gazette*, was first printed at the Arkansas Post.

Most pioneers to Arkansas did not live in a settlement. One family would live by themselves with the closest neighbor sometimes over 15 miles away. They had to clear the land themselves and build their own houses, and all they had to assist them was what they brought with them or what they could find on the land. That is why it was very important to an early pioneer family to choose a location wisely. There needed to be as many available **resources** as possible. The pioneers found all sorts of creative ways to use what they had to make their lives comfortable and prosperous. By the mid 1830s, Arkansas's population had grown from 500 Europeans to over 30,000 diverse settlers. With the declaration of Arkansas's statehood in 1836, settlements were left behind for growing towns.

* The early settlement description was adapted from *The Arkansas Frontier* by Boyd W. Johnson, 1957, pages 53-60. +Photo taken in the Batesville vicinity, circa mid 1800s. Courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, Little Rock.

Glossary for A Brief History of the Settlement of Arkansas

Abundant: to have a lot of something, as in having a lot of wildlife.
Acquisition: to add or to gain something, as in gaining a lot of new land.
Archeologists: people who study objects (artifacts) from the past.
Arkansas Post: the site of the first European settlement in Arkansas, located in southeast Arkansas in Arkansas County.
Capital: a town or city located in state or country where the state/country's government is located.
Expedition: a journey for the purpose of discovering something new.
Exploration: to explore an area to see what it is like.
Junction: place where something is combined or meets, as in where the three counties (Monroe, Lee and Phillips) meet at one spot.
Military post: a place or building where soldiers are stationed.
National Historic Landmark: is a historic place that the Secretary of Interior has said that it is important to the entire United States.
Printing press: a machine that is used to print words on paper.
Prosperity: to be successful in money, goods or in living.
Resources: as in the case of the pioneers, resources are timber, animals to hunt or water, things that are needed to live a better life.
Seat of government: usually located in the capital, it is a place where all government offices and work takes place.
Slaves: someone that is owned by another person. Slaves have no freedom and aren't paid for their work.
Territory: an area of the United States that isn't yet a state, but has its own government.
Thirteen Colonies: Thirteen British colonies that joined together and became the United States of America, declaring independence from England in 1776.
Trading post: a store established by a trader to supply and trade furs and goods to settlers.

Reading Questions for *A Brief History of the Settlement of Arkansas*

1. Who is the first European thought to have explored Arkansas? Where did he and his men set-up camps?
2. What is the Arkansas Post? What did it serve as?
3. What is the largest land acquisition of United States history? In what year did it take place? How much did it cost?
4. Which territory did Arkansas original belong to? In what year did Arkansas become its own territory?
5. What are some of the things that attracted pioneers to Arkansas? When choosing a spot of land for their home, what would the pioneers look for?
6. What are some things you would find on an early pioneer settlement?

Letters from an Arkansas Pioneer

Have students read or read aloud the following two excerpts from letters written by early Arkansas pioneer John Billingsley. The Billingsley family first settled at the Arkansas Post, and later moved west to Fort Smith and Van Buren. These letters were edited by Ted R. Worley for the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* in 1952. The second letter discusses items that were traded by the pioneers with the French and Native Americans in the area. Both letters have the same postmark date. The letters can be used as primary sources. Adapt letters as seen appropriate for K-1st grade students.

Letter Excerpt One:

Billingsley P.O., June 26, 1876.

In reply to your note of June 21, I have this to say: My father, with two other families moved from Middle Tennessee—Charles Addams and Samuel Williams—six in each family, made eighteen persons. That was in 1814. We came to the Post of Arkansas in a flatboat.[*] There we found a French and Creole village. The Quapaw Indians lived on the south side of the river. There we exchanged our flatboat for a keelboat [†] with an old Indian trader. There was nothing like steamboats on the Mississippi River then. We made our way the best we could until we got to the Cadron; there we found one of my father's brothers that had moved from Kentucky in an early day. We stayed there one year. Then there was a treaty made with the Cherokees. They then lived on the Illinois and points along creaks the north side of the river. Some of them lived on the south side of the river on Shoals Creak, now Boales Village. They moved to Texas and lived in what is called Cherokee Country. Then we moved to Big Mulberry. In 1816, we made up about thirty families and lived there two years in all the luxuries of life that a new country could afford, such as buffalo, bear, dear, and elk and fish and honey; we had pound cake every day, for we beat all the meal we ate in a mortar,[‡] and the first year our corn gave out about six weeks before roasting ears came in. Our substitute for bread was venison (deer meat) dried by the fire and then pounded in the mortar and made up in small cakes and fried in bear's oil. That hooped us on until forward Irish potatoes came in. We had all things common. We had no doctors nor lawyers those happy days.

[Then] the government made another treaty with the Indians and we moved on the south side of the river and commenced settling all along the river from Fort Smith to where the present seat of government is now fixed…we soon got thick enough to hold camp meeting and everybody would go and leave their house for a week at a time. And when they came back everything was all right. We then generally built our chimneys up to the mantle piece and hung our meat on the outside on the ribs of the house. If any man had had a lock on any of his doors in those days he would have been looked on with suspicion.

[*] A large flat bottomed boat used in shallow waters.
[†] Simply built boat with the ability to sail used to move freight.
[‡] Editor notes that this type of mortar was probably a hollowed out stump in which the corn was placed and pounded out by a weight.

Letter Excerpt Two:

Billingsley P.O., June 26, 1876.

At the time all the new territory of Washington and Sebastian belonged to Crawford County and the courts were held on the river below Big Creek at the old Jay place. Well, the way we clothed ourselves—that is, the men and boys—was by dressing buckskins and wore full suits of the same. The French came up the river in large canoes and supplied us with domestic and checks and earthing ware [pottery] and calico [cotton cloth with a pattern]. We paid them 37 cents for domestic and 50 cents per yard for calico and 75 cents per yards for checks [material]. I paid $4 for the first set of teacups and saucers I ever owned and $2 for a green-edged dish worth now about 5 cents. We paid 50 cents for all the coffee that we got. This was all paid in bear skins and deer skins and bees wax and that in abundance. For we had honey in any amount. The first settler to Fort Smith was [John] Rogers and he got very rich, he has so large a custom among the citizens and the soldiers. He sold everything vastly high. He had no opposition—only a small trade on the river….

Yours in haste,
John Billingsley

Pioneer Letter Activity: The Arkansas Trading Post

After students have read (or listened to) the letter excerpts have each student write a list of what they think would be good and useful trade ware.
When students have completed writing their lists, have them cut each item out of their paper then have the students determine worth of each item in dollars and cents. Use the second letter excerpt as a guide for prices. Write item prices on the board, taking into consideration feet and yards for cloth.

Select a spot in the room to act as the trading post. You might consider setting up a couple of stations: domestic (soap, utensils, pots, dishes, etc.), food (coffee, sugar, spices, chocolate, etc.), material (calico, check, fur, and skins), tools (knives, hoe, shovel, etc). If you choose to use stations, select a couple of students to be the traders at the stations. Allow the students to select their nationality, for example, French, Spanish, American (from the Thirteen Colonies) or Native American (could be an Arkansas tribe: Quapaw, Osage or Caddo. There were also large groups of settlers from Scotland and Germany in southern and eastern Arkansas).

After station traders have been selected and put at their stations, have the other students move through the stations trading their wares with station traders. You can expand on this activity by including a discussion of transportation to the trading post. Did they travel by river or by wagon? Also, this activity can be adapted to introduce more advanced economic concepts by creating a monopoly on trading posts and routes in an area similar to what was mentioned in the second letter about the first white settler to Fort Smith, John Rogers.

Reminiscences of an Arkansas Pioneer

The below excerpt comes from the article "Reminiscences of an Arkansas Pioneer as Recorded in 1890" by H. M. McIver of Texarkana, Arkansas. The article was featured in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly,* spring 1958. Either have the students read the excerpt or read the excerpt to them. The pioneer's name is Clark Ward and he is remembering his experiences of traveling to the Arkansas Territory with his family in a covered wagon, as well as witnessing the removal of Native Americans (Indian Removal Act of 1830) from his town. This can be used as a primary source.

My name is Clark Ward. I live in Little River County, Arkansas. I was born about 1808 or 1810. I am not sure of my age. My daddy and mother married in Mississippi and moved across the river to what was then known as Louisiana Territory, later known as Arkansas Territory. My father was house carpenter by trade. I had one brother, John, who was 6 years older than me. He died when I was a baby. I had another brother, Henry who was 4 years older than me, then I had twin sisters 2 years older than me. My twin sisters died with swamp fever when I was five years old. The next summer Henry died with swamp fever. These children were all buried out in front of our house.

When my brother Henry died daddy and mother decided to leave their home and move west to Willow Springs (now Rocky Comfort) for their health. We had a wagon, a yoke of oxen, two cows and a bull. Daddy loaded every thing he could haul in the wagon and left the crib full of corn and many other things and also left a good field of green corn. He never went back for anything and we never knew what became of our place and the stuff we left. Oh, yes, I forgot to say; I had a baby brother several months old at the time. They fixed him up in a bed and a crib in the wagon so he could ride.

I do not remember of ever seeing our neighbors who lived 15 miles from us. When we were ready to drive away my mother went over to the graves, knelt down and said a prayer and then went and stood in front to the house taking a last look at our home. She was crying and I cried because she was crying. Daddy went over and put his arms around mother and they walked over to the wagon and we started away.

Our first settlement we were driving for was Camden [Arkansas] and the road was nothing much but a trail. Many times daddy had to cut out and clean out the way. We traveled slow until we got to Camden. We would drive about a half day then stop and let the cattle graze on the grass. I think we started moving about May or June. I remember our corn was about head high and we had good dry weather and no mud to pull through. We must have camped at Camden for several weeks so daddy could work there. [*]

Our next drive was to Willow Springs about 15 miles. When we got to Willow Springs we found about six or seven families settled there. Three of these families were the Taaffe families. They had good log houses, barns and out houses and all of them had slaves.

[*] After Camden, they rode on to Washington where they camped for a couple of days with a family.

They had plenty of land in cultivation and were gathering a big corn crop and they had to build more corn cribs before they could finish gathering their corn. We camped about 500 or 600 yards east of Willow Springs on a spot where the Catholic Church now stands. Daddy went to work building for the Taaffe

families and about the first thing built was a big log house with one big room about 20 feet square for us to camp in. There were a number of people camped around Willow Springs—just a bunch of boomers. We also found about 10 or 12 Indian families camped in Indian huts around over the neighborhood. They were Choctaws and friendly. The Taaffe families had complete control of them. The women and children would work the Taaffe crops with the slaves but the Indian men wouldn't hit a lick. After we had been at Willow Springs for a while maybe a year or so, daddy took a claim about one mile south of Willow Springs on a sandy hill where he built a house and just south of the house was a good black land prairie. Mr. Taaffe loaned daddy his slaves to help him cut the logs and help build a house just like we had over on the Mississippi and the slaves also split rails and fenced in about 25 acres of black land prairie for daddy.

Just under the hill from our new home lived an old Indian (Rain Face), his squaw, one son and two daughters. The squaw was supposed to be half-white, anyway she was light complected. The old woman and the two girls would help us work our crop. My mother thought a lot of the two girls. They had a long name that no one could remember. My mother renamed them Jane and Mary. The boy was named Ishno. These Indians at their cabin would cook everything in one pot. They just mixed up everything they had to eat cooked it in the pot and called it "TOM FULLER." My mother taught these two Indian girls to cook and keep house. They hung around our house a lot more than they stayed at their own cabin.

After we had been at Willow Springs a year or so people began to come in to the country pretty fast. A number of people settled at Laynesport, at what we now know as the Jones farm and in the black lands west of Rocky Comfort, thinking they were in the Indian Territory (what is now the state of Oklahoma). In fact none of us knew whether we were in Arkansas or the Indian Territory until the country was surveyed. The Hopsons and the Simpsons were the first settlers I remember moving in to the Black land, thinking they were in the Indian Nation.

When I was about 17 or 18 surveyors came in and began surveying the country. My daddy got a job helping them and I also got a job with them. His boss surveyor was named Conway and my boss was Ed Cross. I worked with them about three years and while I was with them the State line was laid out. While the surveying was going on a lot of Choctaw Indians were moved from Mississippi and they were unloaded at Willow Springs and told that that section of country would be theirs. Then the state line was moved and the Indian Agents came in and moved them across the line. They also moved the few families that were at Willow Springs when we got there. The next day, after they were moved about all of them were back again and they had to move them again. Somehow the Taaffe families managed to move the original few families that we knew

back and they were allowed to stay. This of course brought old Rain Face and his family back.

When I was about 18 or 19, I took Mary and Loss Johnson took Jane and we were married according to Indian custom. Daddy and mother built Mary and me a little cabin near their house where we lived. Mary lived about four years. Jane and Loss had one boy named Loss for his daddy. Finally old Rain Face, his squaw, and Ishno moved up across the line to Vinegar Hill—they all died there except you Loss and Ishno. Ishno is still living. I saw him a short time ago and young Loss is living up there on the Garland farm. [*]

[*] This excerpt came from pages 56-60 of the article. Certain words were substituted with more appropriate words for the targeted grade group.

Land Runs & the Homestead Act of 1862

The Louisiana Purchase opened up the other side of North America to pioneers, but only the adventurous and fortune seekers were braving the new land. There were two later events that brought pioneer families to explore and claim their own in the new territories: the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Homestead Act of 1862.

*__Indian Removal Act of 1830:__ As white settlers were moving into the southern region of the new territory, they discovered that the land was already occupied by several Native American tribes: the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole. The white settlers saw the tribes as a hindrance to settlement and agricultural progress in the area. One year after becoming the President of the United States, Andrew Jackson pushed new legislation through both houses of Congress. It was called the "Indian Removal Act." The act forced the Native American tribes out of their homelands east of the Mississippi River into designated areas known as Indian Territory (west of Arkansas, what is now the state of Oklahoma). The travel west is known as the Trail of Tears. The land that was taken from the tribes was sometimes given away in a land run or land rush. Fliers or posters would advertise the land run and interested settlers would meet at a starting point on a certain date and race to claim already sectioned off land. Most times the land runs were quite uncivilized. People cheated and sometimes killed each other over land that was taken from the Native Americans.

Student Activity:

2nd-4th Grade: Have students compose a journal entry about how they would feel if they were a Native American during the time of the Trail of Tears and they were told they had to leave their homes, leave behind most of their belongings and travel to some unknown destination. Encourage the students to explore emotional and physical feelings. The Native Americans traveled through all sorts of conditions, many died because of poor preparation for changes in the weather, lack of food and exposure to illness. Or students can write a journal entry from the pioneer's perspective, as a witness to the removal of Native Americans in the area where he/she lives—similar to Clark Ward's story.

3rd-4th Grade: The Trail of Tears went through Arkansas and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has been identifying, documenting and preserving segments of the trail in the state. Have students search the National Register of Historic Places for trail segments and then identify the trail location on a state map: http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Preservation-Services/indian-removal-routes-in-arkansas

* PBS has a resource bank for teachers pertaining to the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that features protest letters by Native Americans: www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html

[*]**Homestead Act of 1862:** The Homestead Act was voted on and passed into law in 1862. The law had a three part process: submitting an application, improving the land for five years and, finally, receiving the land title. Any United States citizen could apply and receive 160 acres of government surveyed land, as long as they stayed and cultivated the land for five years. Improvements to the land included building a 12-by-14 dwelling and growing crops. When the five years were up, the resident could file for the land title and become the sole owner of the land.

Although the Homestead Act made it easier for settlers to acquire land, it was not easy to maintain 160 acres. Changes in the weather and insect infestation threatened crops. Location of the land could also propose difficulties; the open plains of the Midwest have very few trees, which provide protection for crops and dwellings against strong winds, and supply timber for construction; the northern regions are prone to below-freezing temperatures and blizzards, or land along the Mississippi River can suffer from devastating floods, ruining crops and homes. Many settlers received land in places that they knew nothing about, traveling hundreds miles, reaching their destination unprepared for what they might encounter there.[†] Some early homesteaders were unable to battle the obstacles of improving the land, eventually, abandoning the 160 acres before the five years were completed. However, by 1934, more than 270 million acres of land (from homestead applications)-10 percent of all United States land-passed over into the ownership of 1.6 million homesteaders. [‡]

Student Activity:

After discussing the land hardships the homesteaders faced, introduce the natural regions of Arkansas: the river valley, Mississippi Delta, Crowley's Ridge, Gulf Costal Plains, Ozark Mountains and the Ouachita Mountains. Have students select a region and imagine what it would be like for them to move there as a homesteader. Students should consider climate and difficulties a homesteader might encounter while trying to improve their land. This section of the activity would probably need some brainstorming with prompts from the teacher. After this is completed, have students write a letter back home to their family describing what their 160 acres are like (abundance of trees, rocky, etc.), what they are growing (cotton, rice, etc.) and difficulties they are facing (insects, weather, bad neighborhoods, etc.).

For younger students, instead of a letter, students can draw a picture showing what their 160 acres looks like and what they might grow and challenges a homesteader might face during the five years. This can be done in a series of drawings that afterwards, can be displayed in chronological order of the land's development.

---

[*] The National Archives and Records Administration have available a free lesson plan for teachers on the Homestead Act of 1862, including examples of land certificates, downloadable from their website: www.archives.gov. Our Documents website has a lesson plan on African American homesteaders available for download: www.ourdocuments.gov.

[†] PBS's lesson plan *Frontier House* has a section entitled *Bring No Poor Articles with You* that has several activities to do with students concerning basic needs of homesteaders from the 1880s: www.pbs.org.

[‡] Adapted from the NARA teacher lesson plan on the Homestead Act of 1862.

The Arkansas Log Cabin

The single-pen (one room) log cabin has played an important role in the early settlement of Arkansas. Many of these early structures, although altered, continued to supply shelter to Arkansans into the early 20th century, some are still being used today, but with modern additions. However, few have survived from the 1800s due to fire, insects, rot or neglect. The remaining structures can be used as connections to Arkansas's past and heritage. Buildings are historical documents. They can be used to teach a wide spectrum of subjects, like mathematics, science, history, art, geography or even music. Below are some facts about the Arkansas cabin that will help you and your students be able to "read" a building.

CONSTRUCTION:

There are two basic types of wood construction: frame or log. A frame building has a skeleton made of wood planks that were cut at a sawmill. A log building is constructed with hewn or unhewn timber that is stacked and connected by notches in the wood. It is uncertain who is responsible for bringing log construction to the United States. There is debate that it originated from Germany, but some scholars believe its origins are Swedish; however, whatever culture that might be responsible for its introduction, the log construction helped settle the American west.

TYPE OF WOOD: All types of wood were readily available to the early Arkansan settler, and wood was the choice material for building and cooking and heating. Hardwoods, such as oak and cypress, were preferred building materials for a log cabin. Pine was hardly used because it's a soft wood and prone to rot. In the highland region of the state (the Ozarks), oak was the dominant wood choice, and in the lowland region, cypress was the preferred tree for construction.

TOOLS: The types of tools a settler had determined the way the log was cut and used in the construction of the cabin. Tools used in cabin building are the broad saw, wedges of metal and wood (gluts), the chopping axe, the adze, the froe and maul. If the wood is smooth, the wood was most likely cut at a mill.

PLAN: The word "plan" refers to the shape of the structure. When identifying vernacular structures, the plan is the first determinate. The most common floor plan constructed by the early pioneers was the single-pen or one room cabin. Changes and additions were made to the structure after the pioneer had become more established on the land.

Building of a Pioneer Home

The pioneers had a hard journey; it usually took months to reach their destination. Their heavy wagons couldn't travel too far or fast in a day, sometimes covering only two miles an hour. Once the pioneers got to their homestead, the good weather was turning and winter was beginning to set in. Their homes were built with available natural resources and everything was built by hand, so bringing good tools with them was very important. Sometimes there were neighbors to help, but sometimes not. There are several steps involved in the building of a single-pen (one room) cabin.

FIRST:
The logs would be prepared for construction. Round logs were used, but they leave larger spaces between the logs, which lets in rain and air. Most pioneers preferred square logs. The bark would be removed from the logs because bark harbors insects, soaks up rain and encourages rot.

1. To make a clean, square log, the pioneers would hew notches in the log.

2. Then the logs would be scraped down to the notches to get a squared log.

3. Large notches would be made at the end of the logs so the logs would fit together, just like the notches found on Lincoln Logs.

4. The ends of the logs were dovetailed (4 corner notched) to let the rain slide off the end of the log, so the wood wouldn't decay.

5. Cracks between the logs were filled in.

6. The plaster was made of clay or mud, and animal hair was often mixed in to make the plaster thicker. Chinking or daub could be removed during summer for cooling, but added back during winter.

7. An opening is left in the log wall for a doorway. Cut boards can be nailed on top for a finished look, but would require money and more time.

8. When walls are complete, it's time for the roof. Long ridgepoles go along the center of the roof, and then add rafters, hand made shingles

9. A hole would be cut on the inside house wall and on the outside, river stones would be stacked to make a chimney. However, if the pioneer had money and access to a brick factory, the chimney could look like this one.

10. Now, close up the inside boards and you have a functioning fireplace.

11. Many Arkansas pioneers had wood floors rather than dirt floors. A *puncheon* floor is halved logs lined up with cut side facing up.

12. Some log homes had no windows; others had openings used as windows with outside shutter to let in light or a breeze.

Log Cabin Construction Activity

Lesson overview:
Students will prepare building materials, select a floor plan and construct a miniature log cabin using newspaper and glue. Newspaper can be substituted with soda pop straws.

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify the typical forms of cabins that were built by Arkansas settlers such as the single pen or dog trot.

Students will be able to list the steps that the settlers had to take to create a log cabin: selecting the site, preparing the raw materials, building the log structure and filling in the cracks with chinking.

Grade Level:
Grades K-4th, but can also be adapted for 5-12th grades.

Time:
Two or more class periods.

Materials:

Newspaper (or straws)
White glue
Scissors
Poster board (optional)
Ruler
Tempera paint brown (optional)
Paintbrushes (optional)
Masking tape (optional)

Procedure:

Step 1: Just as the settler had to prepare building materials, so will the student, only the student will not have to exert as much energy! Place a sheet of newspaper on a flat surface. The paper should be positioned with one corner pointed directly at you. Starting with the corner, roll the paper tightly into a "log." As you get to the end of the paper, lay a line of glue along the edge to secure the log. Each student will need to roll 10-15 logs for one 8 x 8 inch cabin. The log can be as small as a pencil or as large as bottle cap. (See illustrations 1-4)

Illustration 1

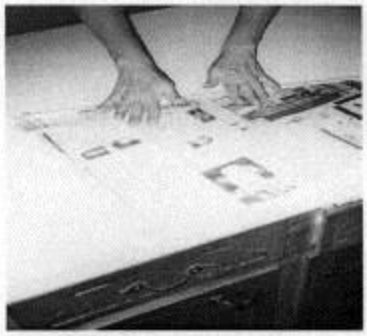


Illustration 2

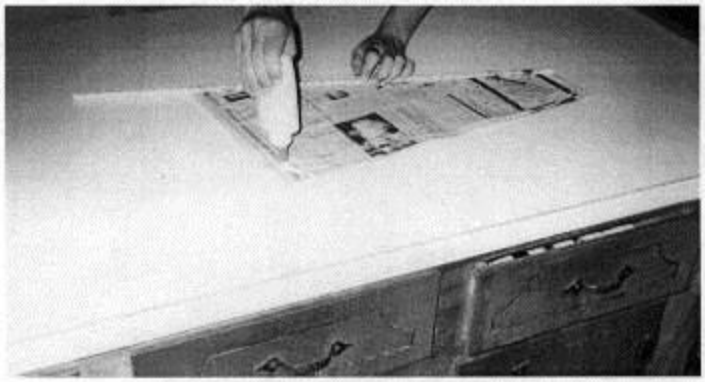
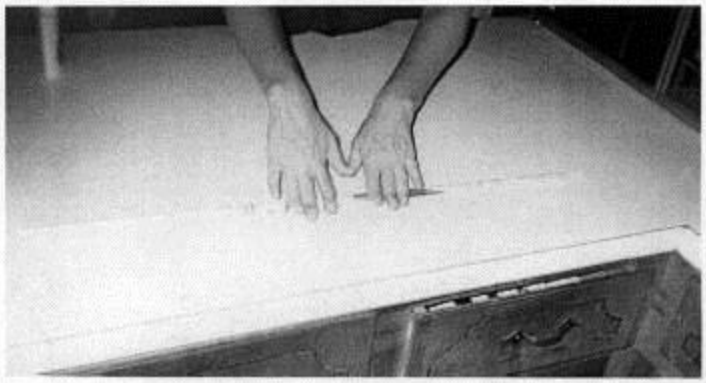


Illustration 3

Illustration 4



Step 2: Students will select the type of cabin they would like to build.
The student will measure and cut the newspaper rolls into the desired length for building. It is wise to create an even edge by trimming 1-2 inches from the roll before you begin measuring.

To incorporate math skills, have students build their model to scale. An example using the scale of 1 foot =1/2 inch, a 16 x 16 foot single pen cabin would be 8 x 8 inches. The student would cut eight inch logs to be used in wall construction.

If the logs are rolled tight, it will be difficult to cut with small scissors. Students can measure and mark the logs, the teacher can then cut the lengths on a paper cutter.

Do not cut all of the rolls at this time. You will need a few longer rolls for roof construction.

Optional: For students that have sharp scissors and loose rolls, the end of the log can be notched or cut to help decrease the gap size between the logs. To notch your paper log simply cut a V close to the end of each roll.

Step 4: Before you begin to construct your cabin, it would be wise to use a piece of cardboard for a base and to catch glue. To build the walls of your cabin, begin with four rolls, two for the eaves (front and back) of the home and two for the gable (sides) ends. Lay the logs for the eaves on the table and overlap the gable logs to form a square. Let the base set for a few minutes before adding a second layer. Continue this process until you have constructed a box. For a 8 x 8 inch cabin, 6 logs were used to obtain the desired cabin height. Use glue only on the areas that the logs overlap. (See illustrations 5-6)

If you do not notch your logs, you will have large gaps between layers. You can fill in the gaps with logs. Measure the gap and cut the log to the appropriate size. You may want to perform this step as you construct the walls of your cabin.

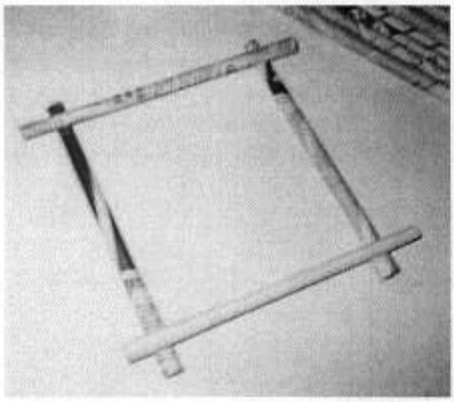


Illustration 5

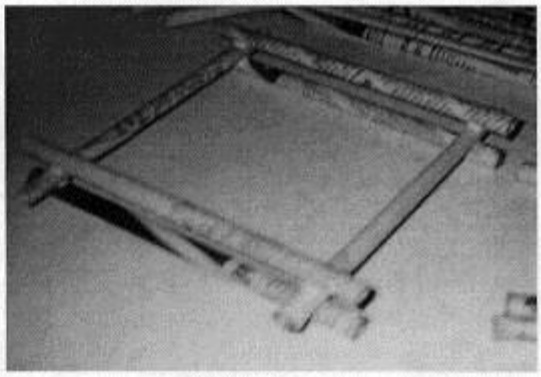


Illustration 6

Step 5: To build your roof, you will need to use uncut rolls. Take a long roll, form a triangle, and cut off any excess paper. (Do not use the entire length of log or your roof will be out of proportion to the cabin base.) The sides of the triangle will give you the pitch or slope for your roof.

For a 8 x 8 inch cabin, you take a 19 inch roll and mark and fold at 1 inch, 5 ½ inches, 5 ½ inches and 7 inches. Attach the 1 inch piece to the 7 inch section with tape. You will need two triangles. (See illustrations 7-9)

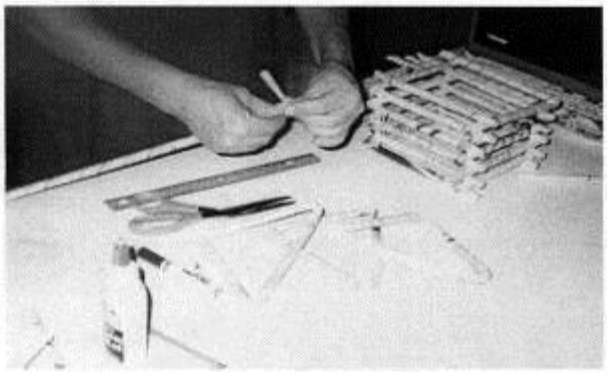
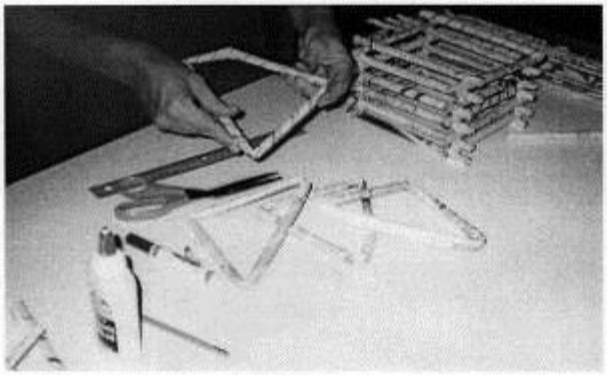


Illustration 7

Illustration 8



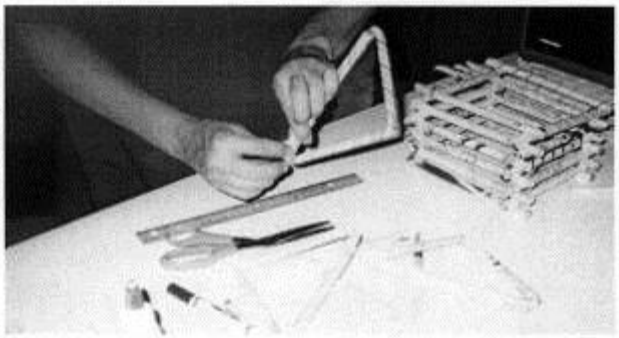


Illustration 9

To finish your frame for your roof, you will need to tape or glue three 7 ½ inch straight rolls to the three inside corners of the triangle. (See illustrations 10-11)

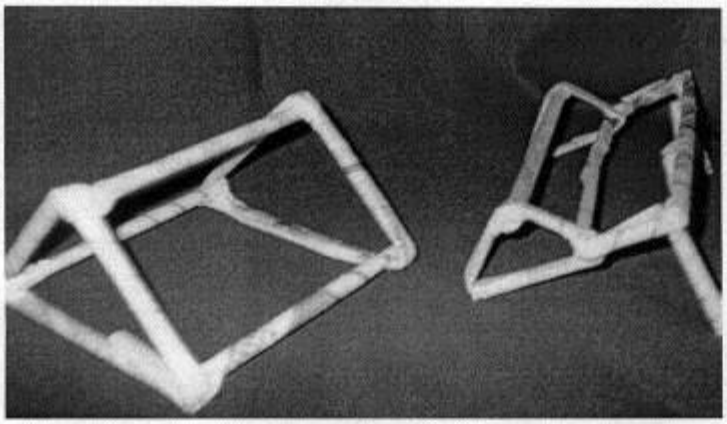


Illustration 10

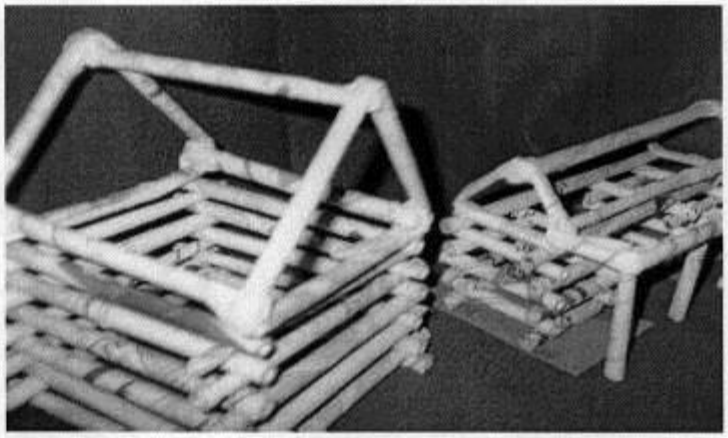


Illustration 11

Glue the base of the triangle to the top layer of logs on your box. Once you have framed your roof, cover with one sheet of paper or cut logs. (See illustrations 12-13)

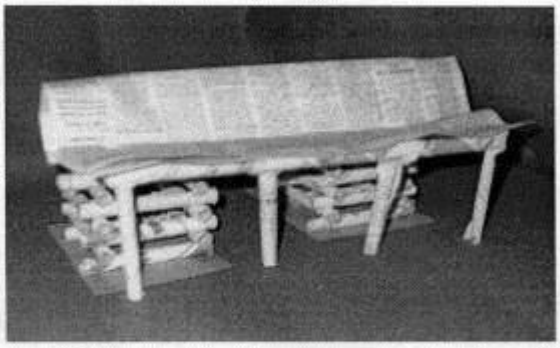


Illustration 12

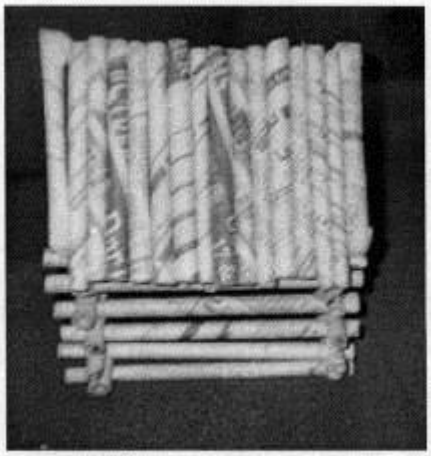


Illustration 13

A porch can be constructed two ways. The first method to construct a porch is to make your roof sheet extend past the cabin. You may then glue poles to support the extension and form a porch. The second method is to use a full roll, place the roll on the inside of the two triangles that form the roof. Fold the log outward and bend and fold a second time to form a rectangle. Secure the roll with tape. (Look at illustration 11 for example.)

Step 6: If you are going to paint your cabin, you should do so at this time. An easy way to perform this step is for the teacher to take the models outdoors and spray with brown paint or students can use tempera paint and brushes to add color.

Step 7: To finish your cabin you may add doors, windows, and chimneys. To add doors and windows, cut out shapes from construction paper and glue in the appropriate places. To create a chimney, you may use paper rolls or construction paper.

Optional approach:

1) The class will read a description from one of the early explorers or settlers about a home site. Students could then discuss the differences between modern homes and territorial homes. The class could be broken into small teams, with each team assigned to construct a section of a farmstead. Other buildings and site features that could be added to the log cabin home are a rail fence, a chicken coop, a barn, a privy, a spring house, a root cellar, and a smoke house.

SEND IN PICTURES OF YOUR CABINS FOR OUR WEB PAGE!

Other Types of Arkansas Log Cabins

Besides the single-pen, Arkansas pioneers constructed other types or "plans" of log cabins. Below are descriptions of four types of log cabins found in Arkansas. After reviewing the descriptions, use the following sections for visual examples of each type.

A **single pen** is characterized by having just one room with a chimney on one side of the structure.

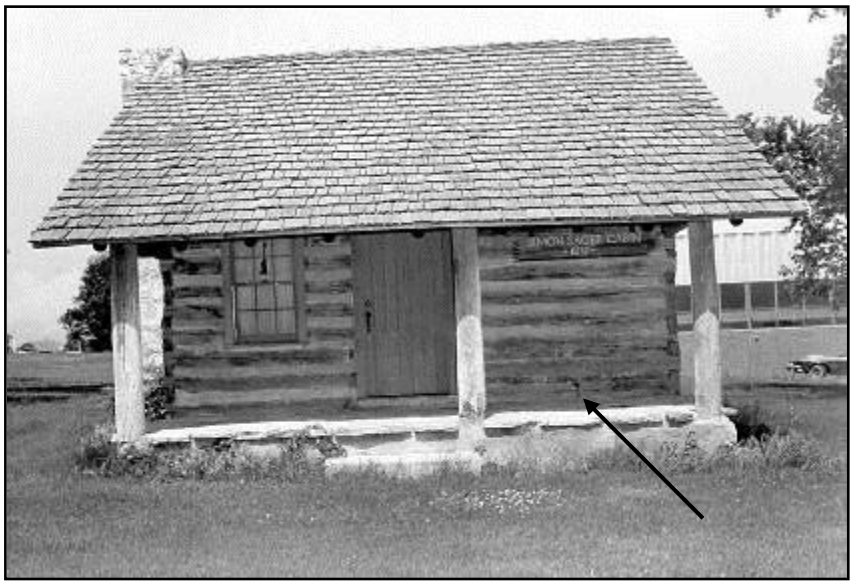
A **double pen** has two pens connected by a wall. There are separate entrances for each pen (room). One of the rooms (probably the room without a chimney) was added after the original construction. To enter the second pen, one would have to exit onto the porch and go in by the next door.

A **saddlebag** is two pens connected by a wall, similar to the double pen, but the chimney is located in the middle of the structure, usually with a two-sided fireplace. It's called a saddlebag because of its resemblance to a saddle with a saddle horn and hanging side bags.

A **dog-trot** has two pens that are separated by a dog-trot or breezeway. Each pen has its own chimney. The dog-trot will have a large front porch with two front doors.

Vernacular Structures in Arkansas

The word vernacular refers to everyday use. It is often used in association with language of indigenous or native people, but it can also refer to structures. Vernacular architecture includes structures that were built by the people of a settlement or community, using accessible resources to meet a local need. The buildings are designed without an architect. The skills and techniques used are those that have been passed down from one person to another. The structures that the Arkansas pioneers built fall into this style of architecture. Included in this section are several examples of vernacular architecture in the state. All of these structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

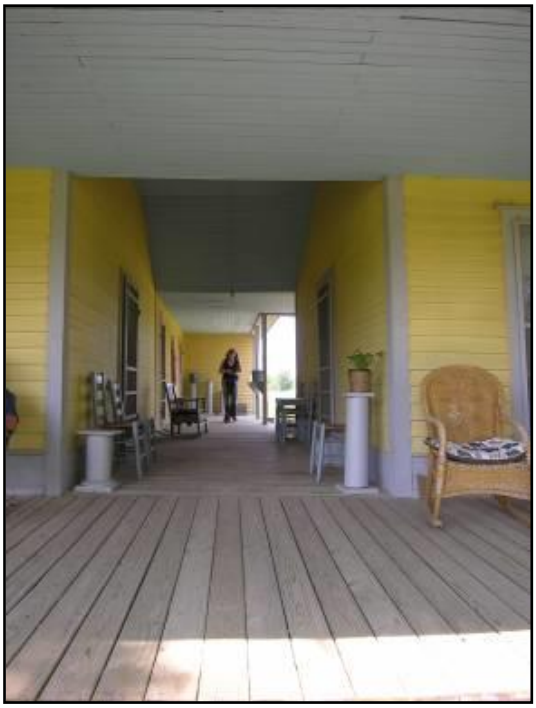


Sager Cabin
Siloam Springs,
Benton County, 1837
Single pen cabin

Parker-Hickman Farm
Newton County, circa 1850
This single pen has a loft and lean-to-shed.

May Farmstead
Newton County, 1880
Double-pen (frame) cabin

Shelton-Lockeby House,
Murfreesboro
Pike County, 1905
Dog-trot (frame) cabin



A breezeway was like an early form of air conditioning. When it became too hot to work in the house, the pioneers would take their work to the breezeway and let the circulating air cool them down. It's called a dog-trot because the family dog could trot through the middle of the house.

Jacob Wolf House
Norfolk, Baxter County, 1825

The Wolf House, a two story dog-trot, is believed to be the oldest standing courthouse in Arkansas.

Royston Log House
Historic Washington State Park, 1835
Saddlebag cabin

Crow House
Star City vic., Lincoln County, 1878
Dog-trot cabin
As pioneer families grew, their houses grew as well. The Crow House is an “ell shaped” plan;another pen has been added to the side of the original dog-trot cabin.

Champs-Grubbs House
New Hope, Drew County, 1859
In time, many of the early dog-trot breezeways were enclosed, creating another room or hallway like this one.

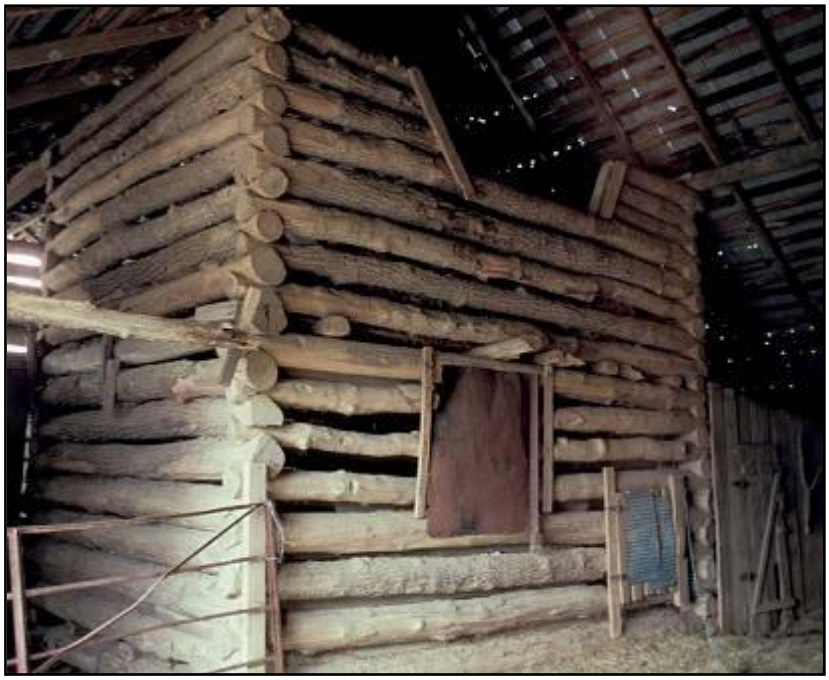
Vernacular Structures in Arkansas, Part 2

Vernacular architecture also includes barns, corn cribs, carriage houses, fences, chicken houses, smoke houses, root cellars and privies (outhouses). Most instances, the barn was nicer than the house the pioneer family lived in. The barn is the home to livestock. The pioneers' animals were their livelihood; they provided transportation, food, labor, clothing and an income. The pioneers made sure their animals had sturdy, sufficient shelter. Below are examples of early constructed barns in the state, as well as other vernacular structures besides houses built and used by Arkansas pioneers.

Anhalt Barn,
New Blaine,
Logan County
1879

This barn was constructed in the German tradition of using wood and stone.

Edward Samuel Wildly Barn,
Etowah, Mississippi County, 1915



Edward Ransom Barn
Midway, White County, 1915
The animal cribs were constructed with logs, similar to a single-pen log cabin.

The smokehouse
Parker-Hickman Farmstead
Newton County, circa 1850
With no refrigerators or preservatives, pioneers had to cure their meat with salt and spices and then smoke to keep it from spoiling.

The split-rail fence
Edward Ransom
Farm, Midway,
White County, 1915

The corn crib
Parker-Hickman Farmstead
Newton County, circa 1850

Two seat privy
Historic Arkansas Museum
Little Rock

The privy (outhouse)
Parker-Hickman Farm
Newton County, circa 1850