

The People Of Our Place

The Missouri Scots-Irish



In the 1800s, early pioneers in the Missouri **Ozarks** were largely **Scots-Irish**, or “**Ulster-Scots**” immigrants from Ireland. These new

Americans originally settled in the eastern United States, and many came to Missouri from the southern **Appalachian** region. These self-reliant pioneers brought skills to settle in the challenging but beautiful Ozark environment defined by spring-fed streams flowing over gravelly, **limestone** terrain through lush oak-hickory forests. The forests and streams yielded wild turkey, venison, squirrel and other game, as well as smallmouth bass and sunfish for hungry families. Hunting and trapping kept Scots-Irish men and boys busy.

Small tracts of Ozarks land were cleared, preferably near streams. Timber was cut square for simple one- or two-room log homes, with one or two windows covered with greased paper instead of glass. Mud, limestone or hay was used in the chinking that held logs. Tough hickory was used for wagon

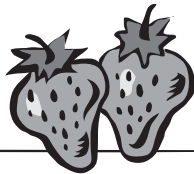
wheels, oak made furniture, and maple and spruce were used for fiddles.

For food a Scots-Irish family might have a few pigs, chickens, and a milk cow. Corn was used in many ways, especially for meal to make cakes or bread. **Sorghum**, a grass plant, was used for syrup when available. Sorghum cane was crushed and boiled until the molasses-like syrup thickened. Corn cob juice and sorghum were used as a sweetener instead of sugar. Wild turkey was fried and even eaten for breakfast with a corn cake and coffee. Fruits could be pureed and dried by the fire to make **fruit leather**.

The homemade fiddles provided enjoyment and music for house parties or dances. The Scots-Irish brought **jigs** to America, and their love of fiddle music has been passed down to this day, adding to the richness of our American history and heritage.



Activities



- Pioneer Fruit Leather – Pioneers made fruit leather as a way to preserve fruits. You may have had rolled up Fruit-by-the-Foot, which is similar to pioneer fruit leather. Make some yourself!

Use any fruit; blend pieces in blender. Pour pureed fruit at least to 1/4 inch thickness onto a greased cookie sheet. Place in 120-degree oven for 4-6 hours; crack door open. Peel fruit leather off and enjoy.

- Housing – Missouri’s pioneer settlers used materials from the land to build log homes from local materials such as oak trees. Most cabins had one or two rooms. Find listings for homes in your community listed in your local newspaper. Look for new homes and homes for sale. Find out the cost, where they are located and how many rooms are in most new homes?

- Song and Dance – Music was important to the Scots-Irish settlers in the Ozarks and it is important to us today. Explore the newspaper for any articles or ads featuring today’s music. Look for concerts and even instruments for sale. Compare and contrast music and instruments used today and music of the 1800s.

Check your library for CDs or cassette tapes and listen to modern music and then listen to an Irish jig or Scottish reel. Learn a square dance or round dance. Sing common Ozark pioneer songs: “Amazing Grace,” “Home on the Range,” “Oh, Susanna” and “Wildwood Flower.” Invite others to your classroom for a square dance and song event using Irish music. Create an 1800s newspaper with advertisements and articles for your event using your local paper as a guide.

Social Studies Knowledge Standards: 2,5,6
Fine Arts Knowledge Standards: 1,2,5
Performance Standards, Goals 1:1,1:2,1:4,1:6,
1:8,1:9,2:1,2:4,2:5

This Newspaper In Education feature is brought to you by this newspaper, Missouri Geographic Alliance and the Missouri Press Association.

Written by Sarah Coppersmith, Missouri Geographic Alliance. The 2004 National Geography Action theme is “Culture: The Sounds of Place.” For more details, visit: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geographyaction/>

