

A Synopsis of Ozarks' History

The Ozarks has been home to a wide variety of peoples for many, many years. Flint work, dating back 10,000 years, was left by hunters and gatherers who migrated through the region. Arrowheads of spear points and knives, which belonged to ancient Indian tribes, have been found dating back 1,000 to 3,000 years.

Prior to the 1800s, the Ozarks' countryside was a rugged wilderness that contained an abundance of wildlife. Since there were no roads, the White River became the highway of commerce for French explorers and trappers. It was the French who gave the Ozarks its name. It began as "aux arc", which was the French name for the bows and the bends in the area's streams. French Canadian trappers also made bows out of the Osage orange trees, which grew in this area.

In the early 1800s Napoleon Bonaparte, ruler of France, was badly in need of money to finance his wars in Europe. United States President Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. The northern part of the territory was called Upper Louisiana and included the present state of Missouri. Upper Louisiana extended northward from the 33rd parallel to Canada and westward to the Rocky Mountains. The Ozark Mountain range extends from the southern part of Illinois, across Missouri, and into Arkansas and Oklahoma.

The Ozarks rise from 1500 feet to 2300 feet above sea level. The highest peaks are the Boston Mountains of Arkansas. The Ozarks region has a total area of about 40,000 square miles, and is surrounded by the Missouri River on the North, the Mississippi River on the East, the Neosho River in Oklahoma on the West, and the Boston Mountains in Arkansas on the South. The hills are covered with timber and contain rich mineral deposits.

The Osage Indians were the last Indian tribe to live in this area. They were moved to the Indian Territories of Oklahoma in the early 1880s. During this same era, the Ozark Mountains became home to a rugged group of people of Scottish-Irish-English descent. The first white settlers to the Ozarks' hills made their way up the White River in 1810. The settlers, bringing skills from the Tennessee woods, adapted well to the rugged terrain in the White River area of the Ozark Mountains. These early homesteaders kept busy building log homes, hunting, farming and rearing families. These folks migrated into this area bringing their own special culture. The Ozarks' "Hillbilly" persona has cultural roots that date back several hundred years to "the old country."

Knowledge Standards **Study Guide**

Knowledge Standards

Students will acquire a solid foundation, which includes the knowledge of:

Communication Arts Knowledge Standards

- Comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as storytelling)
- Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas
- Identifying and evaluating relationships between language and culture

Social Studies Knowledge Standards

- Continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
- The major elements of geographical study and analysis and their relationships to changes in society and environment
- Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions
- The use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps and documents)

Study Guide

Questions: Ozarks/American History

1. Where did the term Ozarks originate?
2. When did the United States of America purchase the land west of the Mississippi, and from whom?
3. What Native American tribes were present in this area in the 1880s?
4. When did the first settlers make their way to the Ozarks?
5. What nationality were the settlers who came here from Tennessee?

Answers:

1. French-Canadian trappers named it Aux-Arcs, which referred to the bows and bends in the rivers.
2. 1803, France
3. Osage
4. 1810
5. Scottish-Irish-English