



History @ Home!



WNC Expansion of 1784

Many Whites passed through the northwestern mountains and became permanent residents of the Watauga settlements (now in Tennessee) in the 1770s. By 1784 the earliest known permanent White settlers in the North Carolina Mountain Region came to the Swannanoa area, what is now known as Buncombe County. Among these early settlers were the Davidsons, Alexanders, Gudgers, and Pattons.

As more Whites immigrated into the area just west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the late 1700s, the Cherokee who were living there were forced to move west. As a result, White migration into present-day Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties grew rapidly for a while. The settlers who came to the Mountains were primarily of English, Scotch-Irish, and German descent. They came to buy, settle, and farm the cheap, fertile bottomlands and hillsides in the region. Some migrated from the North Carolina Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. They came by foot, wagon, or horseback, entering the area through gaps such as Swannanoa, Hickory Nut, Gillespie, and Deep Gaps. Other English, Scotch-Irish, and German settlers came from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. They traveled down the Great Wagon Road to the Piedmont Region of North Carolina and then traveled west to reach the mountains.

Critical Thinking Activity

Purpose: In this activity students will plan a trip by wagon to Western, NC from Charlotte, NC. They will use critical thinking skills to figure out what to pack in their wagon to survive the trip and to start a new farmstead when they reach their destination.

Fun Facts

Black Mountain is 115 miles from Charlotte, NC

How Many days would it take to travel from Black Mountain, NC - Charlotte NC on foot?

Approximately 6 days if you walk 20 miles per day

How Many days would it take to travel from Black Mountain, NC - Charlotte, NC by Horse?

Approximately 4 days if traveling 30 mile per day

How Many days would it take to travel from Black Mountain, NC - Charlotte, NC by wagon?

12 days by wagon if traveling 10 miles per day

Life on the trail

There were no hotels for the settlers to stay in; they were camping the entire way. There were no grocery stores or supply stores – the Trail passed by a few trading posts, and there were a few opportunities to trade with Native Americans, but mostly you had to pack all your food and supplies for the family in a wagon. You might be able to do a little trading, hunting, or gathering along the way. The settlers had to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. They were leaving old homes behind, and they would have to build new homes when they arrived in Western North Carolina. They had to take care of health and safety themselves. They would not be able to buy supplies for building homes and making a farmstead when they arrived.

What do I pack?

You are going to pack your wagon for the trip to WNC to create a new life for your family. You will have to decide what to take, and what to leave. The list has several items to consider, but you are limited by how much you can take total.

Activity Materials

Paper

Pens or Marker

Pennies, Legos, or other small items you can count with

Wagon picture

Consider these questions as you choose

1) What would be the most important things you would take, and why do you consider them the most important?

2) Which of these would bother you the most? Why?

Being hungry

Not having favorite and

Being cold and wet

meaningful personal belongings

Being Stranded

Not feeling safe

3) Wagons usually carried supplies for 4 or more people. The wagons were pulled by mules or oxen, and if you loaded your wagon too heavily, it would injure or kill your animals. You can only load up to 1,600 pounds. Have the kids place a picture of each item they want to pack in their wagon. Then have them add a penny or lego on top of each picture showing how many lbs of each item they want to pack. Each Lego/Penny counts as 10 lbs. Have them continue to add items until it equals 1,600 lbs.

Items List and Weight

FOOD SUPPLY

Apple Vinegar 25

Hardtack 200

Bacon 400

Lard 200

Beans 200

Salt 50

Books 75

Sugar 40

Coffee 80

Rice 200

Medicine 10

Whiskey 40

Dried Apples 80

Water 100

Flour 500

DRY GOODS AND SUNDRIES

Cookware & Eating Utensils 75

Keepsakes 40

Granny's Clock 15

Lead Shot 25

Gun Making Tools 200

Mirror 15

Gunpowder 80

Blacksmithing Tools 200

Tent & Gear 150

Cast Iron Stove 300

Tools 50

Chair 20

Toys 15

Rifles 50

Bedroll 15

Livestock

Milking Cow 200

Chickens 30

Rabbits 30

* If you packed all of these items in your wagon, it would weigh 3,400 pounds!

5) Have the students discuss what they packed and why. Then let them know if they packed correctly and survived the journey. See the essential packing list to figure out if they packed the right amount of items.

Essential Packing List

Medicine 10

Cookware & Eating Utensils 75

Hardtack 200

Tools 50

Lard 200

Blacksmithing Tools 200

Salt 50

Cast Iron Stove 300

Sugar 40

Lead Shot 25

Water 100

Gunpowder 80

Apple Vinegar 25

Rifles 50

Pack Your Vehicle Today

After you've done the Pack Your Wagon Activity, consider how you might do things differently today. If you and your friends, or family, plan a trip of two weeks or more in a car.

1) Will you be camping each night, or staying in a hotel or in a home? How does this affect what you take along?

2) Will you be eating in restaurants or take your own meals? What do you need to take along for these choices?

3) What do you know about where you are going? If you don't know anything, are you more likely to find out by researching or by asking others for their advice? How do you find the best information?

4) If someone tries to sell or give you something to take along on your trip, what is most likely to make you decide to take it along?

Then and Now

The settlers had to deal with very different circumstances than modern day travelers. Which of the following do you think makes a big difference in planning a big venture such as a trip? Put an X by the ones you think are a big difference, and an O by the ones you think are not so different. Make a note of what travelers today do differently that makes it easier or more difficult than the settlers.

. ____ There were few ways to preserve or refrigerate food, and few places to purchase food, so settlers had to carry food that wouldn't spoil. Why is this different today?

____ If the mules or oxen got injured or didn't have enough to eat, the pioneers would have to stop and would be stranded. What would you do if you are stranded while traveling?

____ Medical services were not easily available. If someone got sick, they would have to take care of it themselves. What happens if you get sick while away from home?

____ The settlers were a long way from anywhere, and about the only way to communicate long distances was to ask others to take a message back to the nearest fort, or to a town back east. How do we communicate long distances today?

____ The settlers clothing, tools and wagons were mostly handmade and could be very expensive. If something was lost or damaged, it might be difficult to replace. How do we repair items that are lost or broken now?

Online Resource:

[Printable Wagon](#)