

American Pioneers vs. The Florida Crackers
By Cindi Harris Churchwell Elementary, Lakeland, Florida

I. Lesson Summary

Summary

This is a unit lesson comparing and contrasting the lives of the American Pioneers of the west and the Florida “Crackers” settlers. The unit will explore every aspect of both of these early American settlers. The unit will begin with answering the questions of why they left their present lives. How they got to their new home and how they lived day by day. Plus, the unit will venture on things that are unique for both American Settlers.

Objectives

Students will:

- 1.) Gain an understanding of the hardship of the early American Pioneers.**
- 2.) Be able to compare and contrast the lives of the Pioneers of the west and the Florida Crackers.**
- 3.) By using hands on activities, experience the lives of both American adventurers.**

U.S. History Event or Era

The time in history that will be taught will be from 1821 to 1845.
Territorial Florida.

Grade Level

This is a 4th grade unit using Sunshine State Standards. But, it could be applied to any United States History class in middle school. The following Sunshine Standard apply to this unit: SS.A.1.2.2, SS.A.6.2.3, SS.A.6.2.4, SS.A.6.2.6, SS.D.1.2.1

Materials

All worksheets will be included at the end of this paper. All hands-on activities directions will be given at the end of the unit. References will be at the end of this paper. It will be helpful if a computer and a LCD projector are available.

Lesson Time

This lesson will take 10 days to complete with each lesson lasting 45 minutes.

Lesson Plans for American Pioneers vs. Florida Crackers

Day One: Introduce the early Florida Pioneers by looking at a map of early Florida. Students will work in Kagan pairs. Give each pair a copy of the History of Early Florida and the Life of the Pioneers. Also, give each pair a bubble map graphic organizer. Then as the class reads and discusses the two papers each pair will fill out the maps with as much information as possible. At this time do not do a compare and contrast. Just the facts of the two groups of pioneers.

Day Two: Look at how and why the pioneers traveled from their old homes and ended up in the new land. List possible reasons for the ways of transportation chosen by the settlers. Look at the land and problems unique to each set of Pioneers. Use a class set of Almanacs or the Florida History Book. Record this information on chart paper.

Day Three: Using either a computer linked to a LCD projector or just a computer, look at the pictures of the Lives of the Western Pioneer and the Florida Pioneer. Pictures of Cracker Country and Pioneers of the West are included in this packet.

Day Four: Read sections from the book Cracker The Cracker Culture in Florida History by Dana Ste. Claire. Read the entire book If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon by Ellen Levine. Any information gathered from reading these books can be placed on the class charts or the bubble map graphic organizer.

Day Five: Working in Kagan groups of four the students will make cornbread and make butter. They will taste the treat with real Florida cane syrup. Also, give them a taste of sugar cane. The cane syrup can be bought from Cracker Country or from the restaurant Cracker Barrel. Sugar Cane can be bought from vegetable stands. Recipes at the end of this unit.

Day Six: Students will make a toy from the pioneer life. Which is a button on a string to twirl. They will also experience jumping rope that was made from a Palmetto plant. Directions for making the toy is at the end of this unit.

Day Seven: Students will measure out a 10-inch square of muslin material. They will draw a picture of a Florida symbol and the square. This square will be made into a quilt. (Florida Symbols must be taught before doing this part of the project.) Detailed directions for making the quilt are at the end of this unit.

Day Eight: Students will return to their Kagan partners to finish the comparing and contrasting of both pioneers. The teacher will lead a discussion of unique things that each set of pioneers might experience. (alligator, dust storms, etc.)

Day Nine: Each pair will share their mapping graphic organizer with the class. The other class member will look at their maps and write ideas down that they might have missed.

Day Ten: A written assessment in FCAT style.

Test on American Pioneers vs. Florida Crackers

1. Florida's towns grew because of
 - a. people were having lots of children.
 - b. agriculture and shipment of farm goods.
 - c. land was free.
 - d. people loved living in the swamps.

2. In both Western families and the Florida families leisure time centered around
 - a. the saloon.
 - b. parties in the barns.
 - c. church and church activities.
 - d. fun at school.

3. Most Western Pioneers came to their new lands by traveling
 - a. in wagon trains.
 - b. on trains.
 - c. horse.
 - d. airplanes.

4. Both types of settlers worked from
 - a. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 - b. sunup to sundown 6 days a week.
 - c. Monday to Friday.
 - d. Sunday to Saturday

4. The United States encouraged people to move to Oregon by offering lands for
 - a. free.
 - b. trade.
 - c. Homesteading.
 - d. land for thousands of dollars.

5. How long did it take the pioneers to travel from Independence, Missouri to Oregon?
 - a. 3 days
 - b. 6 months
 - c. 6 weeks
 - d. 6 years

6. Which of the following hardships would the Florida Crackers have to worry about but the Western Pioneers would not encounter?
 - a. Rattlesnakes
 - b. Little or no food to hunt
 - c. Angry Native Americans
 - d. Alligators

1. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/flwphtml//ffgroups.html>
2. <http://www.floridahistory.org/crackers.htm>
3. <http://www.museumsofwv.org/index.cfm>
4. <http://www.floridahistory.org/floridians/textpg.htm>
5. <http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/maps/1800/geog25.htm>
6. Harcourt Brace Social Studies, pages 199-223, 2002
7. Cracker The Cracker Culture in Florida History, Dana Ste Claire,
The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach, Florida, 1998
8. If You Traveled West In A Covered Wagon, by Ellen Levine, Scholastic Inc.,
1992

Directions for making a Cracker toy

**Take a 12-inch piece of leftover yarn, thread, string, or thin leather.
Thread an old button on the string.
Tie the ends of string.
Twist the string and watch the button twirl.**

Directions for making a class quilt.

**Have each student pick a picture to draw or trace.
After they practice several times, give each child a 10-inch onion skin or
other see through piece of paper.
Have them draw, but not color, their picture.
Next, each student will need to measure and cut a 10-inch piece of white
muslin material. (Measure twice cut once)
Each child places the muslin over its picture and they trace the picture on
the material.
Then each student colors their picture using regular crayons.
Next, using brown paper bags or brown craft paper and place it over the
muslin picture.
Set the iron on the hottest setting with no steam.
Iron the brown paper bag.
This will set the crayon into the material.
Next, sew each square together.
It will be up to the teacher if they wish to add matting and a back to the
quilt.**

Country Corn Bread

1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
¼ cup of sugar
4-teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
2 eggs
1-cup milk
¼ cup shortening
1cup yellow cornmeal

Mix flour with sugar, baking powder, salt, and cornmeal.

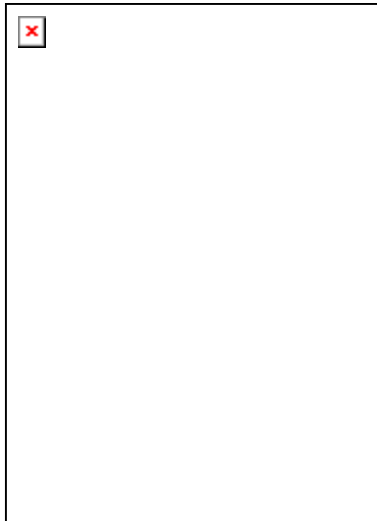
Add eggs, milk and shortening.

Mix until smooth.

Pour into a hot greased large cast iron skillet.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until it cut clean with a butter knife.

Who Were the Pioneers?



Pioneers were the first people to settle in the **frontiers** of North America. Although many of the pioneers were farmers, others were doctors, shopkeepers, blacksmiths, missionaries, lawyers, and so on. They came from many places in the United States to start their new lives. The majority of their **ancestors** came from European countries such as England, Germany, and Scotland. Before leaving their homes they either saved money for the trip, sold their land and other **possessions**, or agreed to work for others on the trip.

<u>Why did they travel to the frontier?</u>
<u>Where did the pioneers travel?</u>
<u>What are some of the trails they used?</u>
<u>What did they take with them?</u>
<u>How did they travel?</u>
<u>What were their wagons like?</u>
<u>What was a Wagon Train?</u>
<u>Who led the Wagon Train?</u>
<u>What were their lives like on the trail?</u>
<u>What did they do after reaching their new homes?</u>

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CRACKER COUNTRY - The Florida State Fair

Cracker Country is located at the Florida State Fairgrounds off US301 east of Tampa. Here authentic Florida buildings, built from 1880 to 1920, have been moved to establish a rural community resembling Florida in the late Victorian Era. While there are many year-round educational programs held at the site during the school year, the best time to visit is early in the day during the fair when you can watch the volunteer "pioneers" go about their 1880's activities.

Cracker Country



Carlton House



Corn Crib



The Rainey Building



Castalia School



The Church



Cemetery



Smith House



Smoke House



Cane Mill and Syrup Kettle



Post Office



Train Depot



Wooden Caboose



Governors Inn



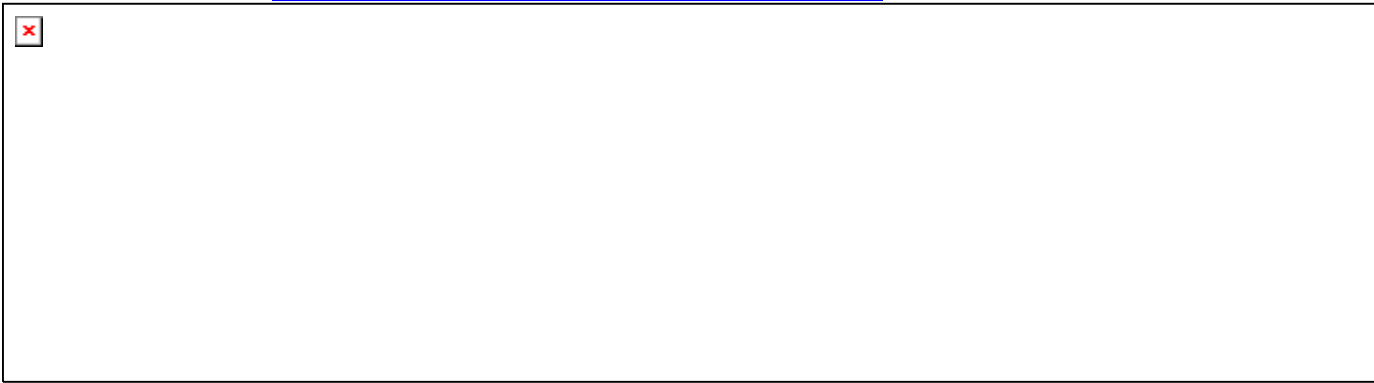
Interior of Governors Inn



Terry Store



Murphy's Kitchen



**URBAN LIFE IN EARLY FLORIDA
PART TWO OF TERRITORIAL FLORIDA**

TOWN FOLK

TOWN FOLK: In contrast to the rural Cracker were the townsfolk, who provided centralized services in small towns cross the farming belts and in the port cities. There were few towns of large size. The Spanish military centers of Pensacola, St. Augustine, and Key West, were soon surpassed by Jacksonville, the Eastern gateway, and Tallahassee, as key towns.

Andy Jackson, as a Southerner, wanted Florida to remain two territories, but Northerners controlling Congress opposed the development of two slave states. They insisted upon one slave state, and both Pensacola and St. Augustine made bids to be the capital city. . The logical solution was a new, more centrally located town, and, in 1823, Governor DuVal sent **John Williams** of Pensacola and **William Simmons** of St. Augustine to select a spot halfway between their port villages. Fortunately, their selection was in the Tallahassee Hills, the most fertile plantation region.

Agriculture and the shipment of farm goods determined the growth of most Florida towns. Jacksonville grew out of the King's Road crossing near Cowford, a boat transfer spot of the St. Johns River. Middle Florida was soon dotted by cotton markets: Quincy (1825), Monticello (1828), and Marianna (1829). Apalachicola (1830), at the mouth of the river of the same name, became the third largest seaport on the Gulf of Mexico. It was temporarily rivaled by a man-made port, St. Joseph (1836).



Florida was the least industrialized region in the agricultural South. The townsfolk remained professional and service people. The major industry was still the lumber industry with its related naval products of tar, pitch, turpentine and resin. Lack of railroad services did not allow this asset to complete successfully with forestry industries closer to the

urban North. In order to increase the price of local cotton, Tallahassee and Madison constructed small cotton mills, but there was no attempt to build cotton cloth factories, a more expensive investment.

Towns in Florida gained their status as central market centers and political headquarters. Florida's few public and private schools were located in towns, but the wealthiest of the planters and merchants choose to ship their children to schools in Savannah and Charleston. It cost nine to twenty dollars per year for the tuition of rhetoric, botany, Latin, geometry, surveying, moral philosophy, chemistry, and algebra. Rural children could not afford this tuition let alone boarding their kids in town, so basic reading and writing by someone who could read was the school system for the working farm child.

[GOVERNOR WILLIAM D. MOSELEY](#)
[BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM D. MOSELEY](#)
[GOVERNOR THOMAS BROWN](#)

TOWN LIFE. Recreation in town centered around the church and official celebrations. With few theaters and no opera houses, simple entertainment like supper, parties, picnics, and dances prevailed. An occasional drama company from New Orleans or Charleston, or a traveling orator, filled the cultural docket of Jacksonville and Pensacola. The town folk and the farmers favored amusement of a more physical nature, such as cockfighting, horse racing, and jousting tournaments.

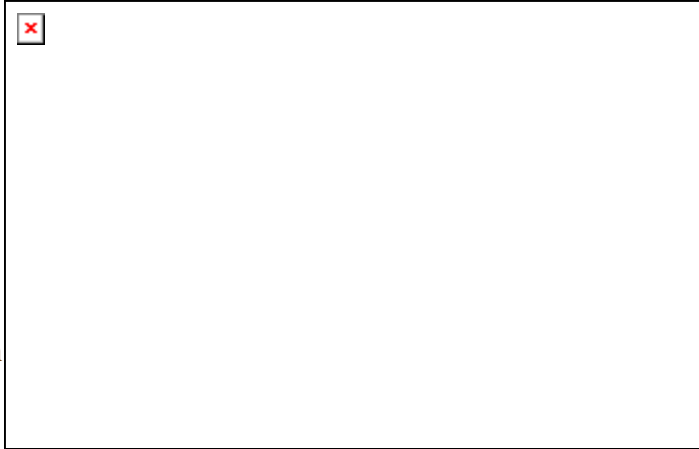
Every large community had its own festivals. St Augustine's Minorcan minority maintained the Spanish custom of holding a Posey Dance once a year. Single girls lit a candle in a window to summon potential suitors to ask them for a date. Each gentleman left a small gift. At midnight, the men folk left and the girl choose her date by placing all but the chosen man's gifts outside on the front doorstep. Pranksters, however, enjoyed taking the objects of the ugliest bachelor in town, thereby creating an unfortunate conflict of interest the night of the dance.

Pensacolians held a festival known as the paud-gaud, or paper turkey. The turkey was a rifle target made of hard cypress root and decorated with dozens of ribbons each representing gifts from the town's single ladies. Bachelors attempted to shoot off their favorite maiden's ribbon, thus winning a picnic date the festival. The town's worst shot not only got the ugliest girl, he and his date were chosen the king and queen of the paud-gaud as the last matched couple. Equally unusual was the popular harassment known as the sherivaree, where locals celebrated the marriage of a widow or widower by clanking pots and pans under their honeymoon suite. If the newlyweds were clever, they fled town.

Rural communities were more reserved about such rowdy activities, which required a congested population and a few taverns for good measure. Pastors forbade drinking and horse racing in many fundamental churches. Despite bans on gambling and ten-pin bowling, the growth of towns diluted some of the organized opposition to these wilder amusements.

PROVINCIAL WALLS. Even without the development of organized opposition to slavery in the Northern states, there was a wall of provincialism and anti-intellectualism across the Florida frontier. The small farmer was too busy in surviving than reading books or debating politics. Libraries were non-existent, and a large segment of the population resented anything that smacked of elitism or change.

In the 1840's when romanticism in the North fostered societal dreams for a better world and reforms for society, Florida's educated population viewed the Romantic Movement as a way to look at the past for a verification of its institutions. . Ministers and writers in the South reinforced this version of romantic thought. Few women in the South were educated past finishing schools, and even they spoke for management estates and families, not for more women's liberties and opportunities. Because most feminist leaders in the North supported abolishing slavery, women's rights were not strong issues in Florida.



Of all the reform movements spreading across the country by the 1840's, only the temperance movement developed strong support in Florida. Most Church leaders believed the attack on alcohol was imperative to purge their flock of bad habits. Even here, Northern temperance leaders were not welcomed, since many of them accepted abolitionism.

Florida was unfortunately an ideal environment to stifle any intellectual movement. There were few towns and schools. The communications media was controlled by the planters and their allies. Agrarianism was conservative by tradition and time-consuming by life style. It was impossible to renounce the basic institutions without attacking the political and economic leaders. There were a few radicals even in Florida as noted by the efforts of Quaker **Jonathan Walker** of Pensacola who was caught smuggling slaves to the Bahamas. Until 1845, most Floridians were consumed by the goal of making Florida a state.

MADISON COUNTY (Florida) in 1850

What was the Cotton Kingdom of Florida like in 1850? Using data compiled from the Census of 1850, Elizabeth Sims included this data in her fine [A History of Madison County, Florida](#) (Madison County Historical Society, 1986)

: Population: 2,802 whites 2,688 blacks

Occupations:

406 farmers (76%) 6 shoemakers 1 saddler

38 laborers 5 public workers 1 engineer

36 carpenters 5 tailors 1 stage driver

8 physicians 4 teachers 1 painter

7 bookkeepers 4 blacksmith 1 boot maker

7 lawyers 4 ministers 1 harness maker

6 merchants 3 brick men 6 carriage makers

Origins:

48% born in Georgia; 34% born in South Carolina; 5% born in Florida

Agriculture:

264 farms with 35 farms over 500 acres; 16 farms over 1,000 acres

256 farms had milk cows

259 farms had hogs

113 farms had only one horse

3 farms had no horses

EVENTS PROMOTING STATEHOOD

EARLY RAILROADING. Since the wealth of Territorial Florida was centered in the hills of Middle Florida, the desirability of building a transportation system extending to the Atlantic port of Jacksonville as well as southward to the Gulf of Mexico was imperative to bolster the state's population. As early as 1826, Southern politicians had proposed a Federal cross-state canal, connecting the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico. Northerners would only finance the necessity of developing a lighthouse system from Amelia Island to the Florida Keys, a plan that also benefited Northern-shipping firms.

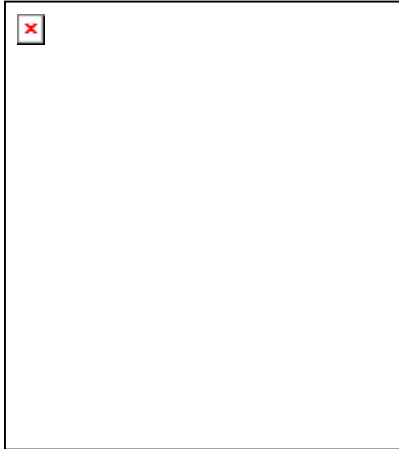
In 1831, Florida's first railroad was chartered. The state government gave on-half million acres to the **Tallahassee Railroad Company** to construct a mule-driven tram between Tallahassee and Port Leon on St. Marks Bay, a distance of only 22 miles. The tiny firm did make Tallahassee an ocean ready port for cotton and lumber products.

[FLORIDA'S EARLY RAILROAD SYSTEM](#)

[EARLY OYSTERING IN APALACHICOLA BAY \(Florida State Archives\)](#)

[APALACHICOLA's JOHN GORRIE DEVELOPS FIRST AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM \(postcard Florida State Archives\)](#)

More significant was the **Lake Wimico and St. Joseph Canal Railroad**; nine miles of track connected the Apalachicola River to St. Joseph Bay. Overnight **St. Joseph**, now part of Port St. Joe, stole river trade from the older port of Apalachicola at the mouth of the river. These railroads only benefited limited areas.



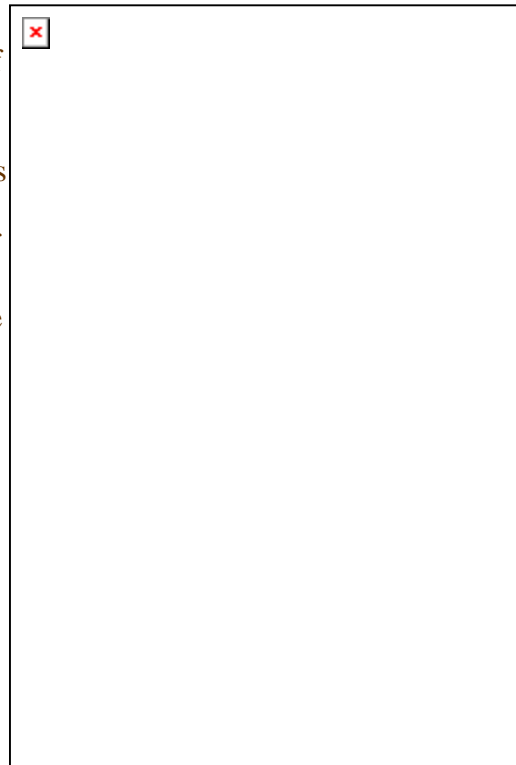
It was Senator David L. Yulee's work in Washington that fostered the **Federal Swamp Land Act**, which granted thousands of acres to the Florida Internal Improvement Commission to promote transportation. The gift of 29 million acres helped the **Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central Railroad** connect Jacksonville with Lake City. Yulee's greatest political success was his Florida Railroad Company, which gained over three million dollars in guaranteed bonds from the F.I.I.F. Yulee needed only \$345,000 to complete his cross-peninsular railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Key.

THE ARMED OCCUPATION ACT.

More important than even good transportation was more population, necessary to gain Florida statehood. The United States Congress helped this cause with the **Armed Occupation Act of 1842**. This law granted 160 acres of land in the unoccupied regions of Florida to any settler willing to bear arms to defend the property for five years. While the program was not the major cause of southern migration from Georgia and Alabama, it certainly provided a needed incentive. The Act remained in force only nine months, but 1,184 homesteading permits were issued. Many of the permits were issued to the first pioneers of Central Florida. The end of the Seminole Wars would be the other vital factor making Florida a state.

The 1842 Act was short-lived. Not due to Northern opposition, but due to the resentment of planters and land speculators who feared the Act would foster an unmanageable land boom. The planters hoped to convert the Florida swamplands into rice and sugar plantations once the Seminole menace was silenced. The arrival of thousands of small farmers, few of whom owned slaves, was a hindrance to the overall development plans of the planter aristocracy.

When statehood appeared years distant, the planters supported a liberal immigration policy, but now that Florida was nearing its ultimate achievement, the planters revised their assessment of the the demographic situation. An influx of poor small farmers might oppose and



would delay needed taxes for transportation projects favored by the planters.

THE ISSUE IS STATEHOOD. Aside from the Seminole Wars, covered in Chapter 9, no event so divided Territorial politics more than the battle for statehood. It was more a question of "WHEN", not whether. The planters wanted to unite Florida to the economic and political interests of neighboring Georgia and Alabama, but this required a massive building program of railroads and canals. The interests of the small farmers, the cattlemen in the peninsular, and many Northern investors was to delay statehood, until they had better control of their political destinies.

In 1837, the planters prematurely passed a bill to obtain a census and referendum for statehood. It was discovered the state did not yet have enough population for two representatives to Congress, an original planter promise. Nevertheless, enough Floridians voted to set up a constitutional convention that the first statewide meeting for a new government met in the boomtown of **St. Joseph**. The meeting, in December of 1837, revealed the division over statehood, taxes, and land development.



There was much hope over Florida statehood, since at that time it was expected that Kansas would soon be ready as a free state. The small farmers delayed the main vote to bring up all their serious oppositions. They wanted a revision of Florida's bank charters to offer loans for small farmers, since they claimed the state's three existing banks - the **Union Bank of Tallahassee**, the Bank of Pensacola, and the Southern Life Insurance and Trust Company - were owned and operated by planters, Europeans, and Northerners. When the planters brought up bank financing of a new railroad project, the small farmers tried to utilize anti-bank sentiment to delay Florida's statehood bid.

In January of 1839, the first Constitution for the State of Florida was passed at St. Joseph, but only after some realistic compromises on the issues of bank policy and state loans. In the statewide referendum later that year, the Constitution passed by a vote of 2,070 to 1,953. The large planter population of Middle Florida barely offset the negative vote from Pensacola and Jacksonville. Enough small farmers were wooed by compromises on banking and stricter laws against the freedmen to modify the results of their vote.

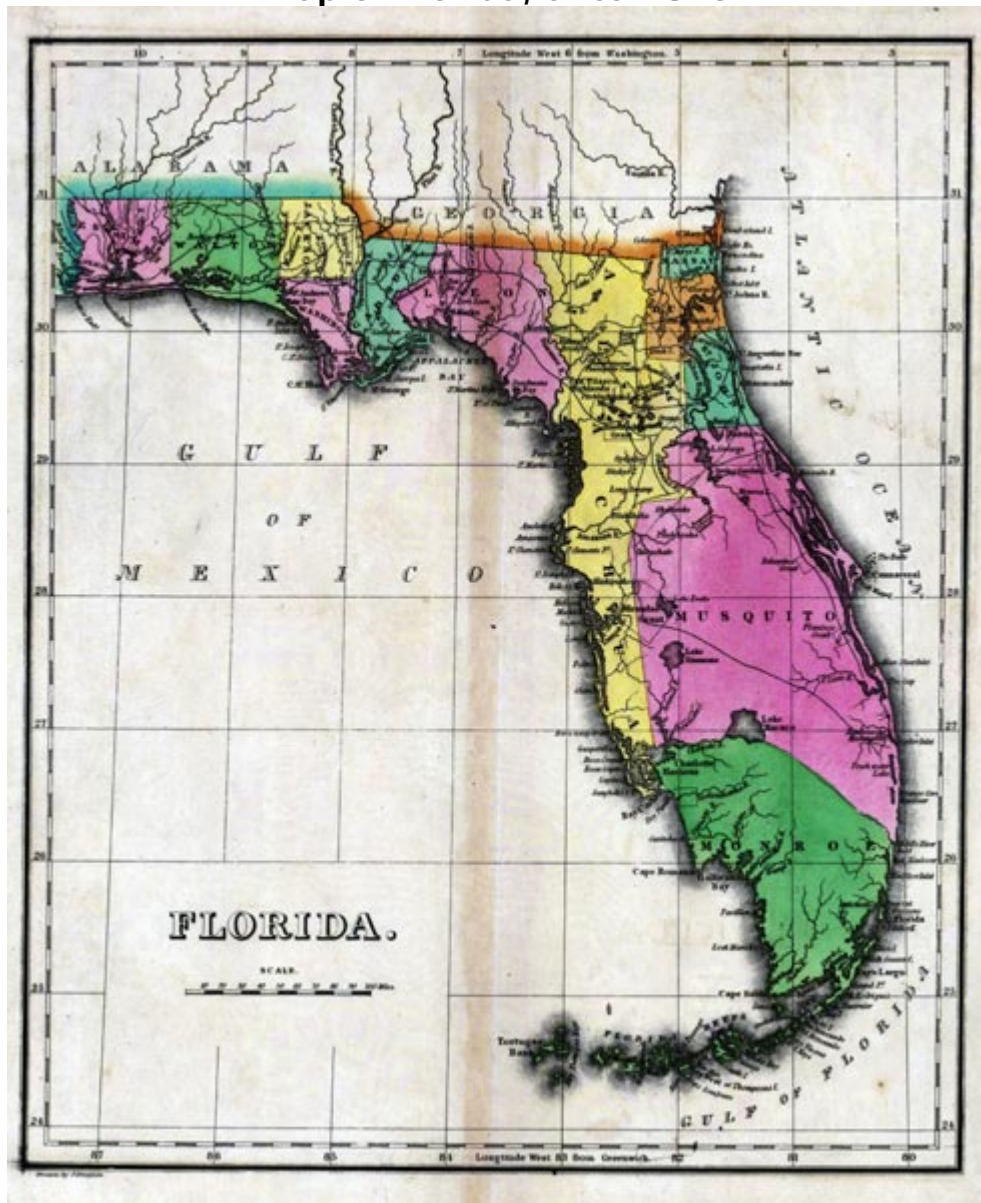
The vote on statehood did not grant Floridians their immediate wish. Six years would pass as the United States Congress considered Florida's application for statehood. There was a reevaluation of the census data. Territorial Delegate Levy was a strong proponent

against Northern opposition. In March of 1845, Florida's application for statehood was accepted, in part, because Iowa was prepared to enter the nation as a state. Thus, Iowa and Florida became sister states in the continuing game of sectional politics in Washington.

[RETURN TO MAIN FLORIDA HISTORY TEXT MENU](#)

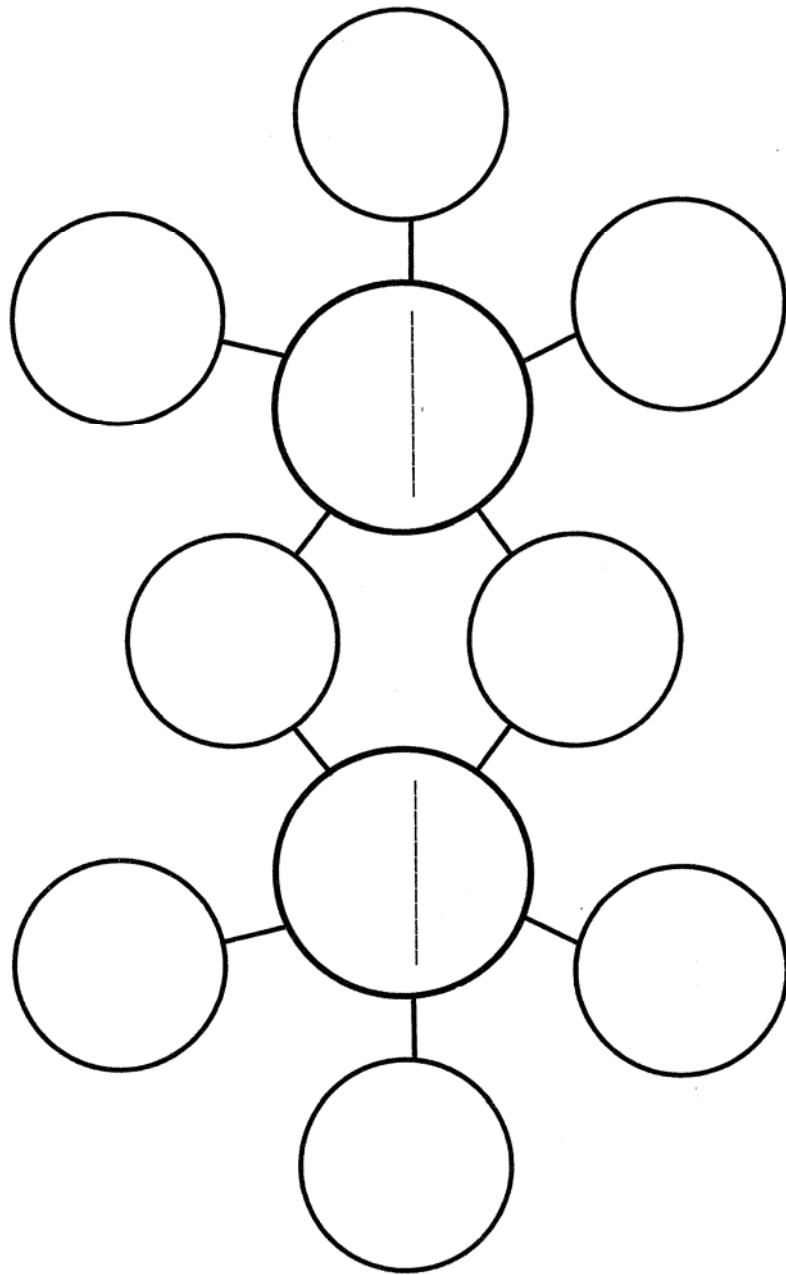
For WOKBOOK and REFERENCE MATERIAL on this topic, go to the main menu and the LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER.

Map of Florida, circa 1825



Circa 1825, Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Map of Florida.

Comparing and Contrasting



INTRODUCTION

The pioneers were hard working people. They grew or hunted what they ate. They built their own homes and made their own clothing. The pioneers were familiar with all things in their homes. They had made them.

The life of early settlers was not easy. The men and women had to be strong. At times, they lived in fear of Indians. Each day they worked hard. The clothes got washed. The cows got milked. The children were taught. The fields got cleared and the barns were built. From sunup to sundown, each family member did the daily tasks to survive.



These pioneers had chosen some of the oldest mountains, for their new homes. These Appalachian pioneers had many children - six to ten. The children grew up, married and moved a few miles deeper into the wilderness to build their homes.

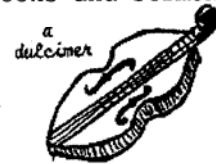


Many pioneer settlers had little or no schooling. But they had the skills and help of their parents and grandparents. They came from different backgrounds. Some were English, Scottish, Irish or German. These pioneers were proud people. They wanted to be free.

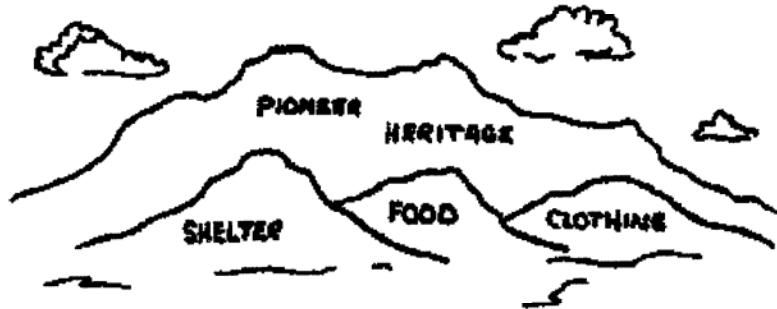
The mountain people believed in the rights of individuals. Settlers of this area now known as West Virginia helped to start the new government in America. Many of these mountain men fought in the Revolutionary War. They showed their courage and love for America. They helped build the early towns of this area.

The life of a pioneer settler was often a life of discipline and religion was an important part. Religion gave them a purpose and a comfort. In most areas, religion was practiced within each home with the family Bible, psalm books and sermon books. Log churches were built. Prayer meetings were held.

Mountain people really liked to sing. They sang to feel good about themselves. While they worked they would sing. These songs tell us



worked, they would sing. These songs tell us about their feelings of hope, happiness, sadness and fear. Music was not written down. One learned a song from someone else. The music did not belong to one person. It belonged to all of the people. Some musical instruments of mountain people were the fiddle and the dulcimer.



The pioneer family was largely concerned with existing. Each day was filled with struggles of survival. Each family member had chores to do. They would help each other. Meeting the needs for , and was an endless task.

Introduction || || ||

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