

Kentucky

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDUCATOR PACKET

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

A SURVEYOR'S ESSENTIALS, ca. 1800

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[Indian Fortification Map, 1785.](#)

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kentucky Frontier

Many early white explorers and hunters exploited Kentucky's bountiful land and wildlife. Word of Kentucky's riches quickly reached the seaboard colonies. Family farmers, speculators, merchants, planters and those they held in slavery soon flooded into the region. Within 25 years, 250,000 people lived in the new Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Dreams of economic gain lured the first Euroamericans over the Appalachians. Buffalo, deer and beaver attracted hunters and fur traders in the 1760s. In the years that followed, fertile land and the mild climate drew farmers, rich and poor, to Kentucky. Speculators joined the first settlers, eager to obtain land cheap and resell it for a higher price. The wave of westward settlement began at Fort Harrod in 1774. By 1800, nearly 200 forts and stations had been established.

Towns grew quickly on the frontier. As commercial centers, they attracted merchants and craftspeople that sold and traded their goods with farmers, hunters and American Indians. As social centers, they became the location of educational, religious and political activities. From rough-and-tumble ports like Limestone (now Maysville) to "well appointed" towns like Lexington, these frontier communities symbolized the rapid transformation of the wilderness.

Surveying in Kentucky

In the 1700s land was wealth, but obtaining a legal title was a complicated process. Veterans of the French and Indian War earned land for their service. Some settlers bought claims from a land company. Others just moved in.

Haphazard surveying by inexperienced or unethical surveyors resulted in overlapping claims. The legal battles that followed attracted a new kind of frontiersman: the lawyer. Even with lawyers, many settlers, including Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton, lost all the land they claimed through lawsuits and disputes.

THEME *Frontier Kentucky*

OBJECTIVE *To learn about the items carried by a surveyor and to better understand the importance of surveying to frontier life.*

ARTIFACT LIST

1. [Compass \(2003.40.1\)](#)
2. [Surveying Chains \(2003.40.3\)](#)
3. [Haversack \(2008.19.44\)](#)

VOCABULARY

Artifact	<i>something made or modified by humans usually for a purpose</i>
Claim	<i>a right to something usually in another's possession</i>
Compass	<i>a device for determining direction by means of a magnetic needle swinging freely and pointing to the magnetic north</i>
Euroamerican Frontier	<i>a U.S. citizen or resident of European descent the land or territory that forms the furthest extent of a country's settled or inhabited regions</i>
Haversack	<i>a bag similar to a knapsack but worn over the shoulder</i>
Settler	<i>a person who settles a new region</i>
Survey	<i>to determine the exact form, boundaries, position, extent, etc., of a tract of land or section of the country by linear and angular measurement and the application of the principles of geometry and trigonometry</i>
Surveying chain	<i>a 66 foot chain that consists of individual poles hooked together and is used to measure areas of land</i>
Surveyor	<i>a person who inspects something officially for the purpose of determining condition, value, etc.</i>

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ARTIFACT OBSERVATION

Use the table below to help analyze the artifacts. Consider listing things such as the size and shape or make a guess at what the object is or was used for. What do you wonder about the object?

I See...	I Think...	I Wonder...

ARTIFACT INTERPRETATION

Answer the following questions in 3-5 sentences.

What do these artifacts tell us about the people who made and used them?

Knowing what you do about these artifacts and surveyors, what do you think life was like in frontier Kentucky?

What do you know about surveying today? Using a teacher approved resource, research and compare and contrast surveying in frontier Kentucky with surveying today.



Compass (2003.40.1)



Haversack (2008.19.44)



Surveyor's Chain (2003.40.3)