

# Summary: Life in Early Tennessee

## On the Frontier

The pioneers in Tennessee used what they found to live. Many settled by sources of water, such as the Watauga River. Others cut down trees to clear the land so they could farm it. Then they used the wood from the trees to build log cabins in which to live.

The settlers could not bring much more with them than seeds to plant and a few animals to raise. The most common crops they grew were corn, apples, oats, and wheat. They used the things they found to make clothing and tools. They also hunted wild animals and gathered wild plants for food.

If American Indians attacked, the settlers gathered together at the closest fort. Many people built their cabins by forts on purpose. In time, some forts became the center of communities such as Nashville.

The coming of the settlers changed Cherokee life. The Cherokee began hunting for more animals than usual because they could trade the skins and fur for goods from the settlers. They also learned new skills from the settlers. The Cherokee men began to spend more time farming instead of hunting, while the women did household chores.

## Customs and Celebrations

Life on the frontier was different than life in the colonies back east. Because the pioneers had brought few tools and materials, they depended more on the things they could grow and collect from the land. Corn was one of their main sources of food, and they prepared it many different ways.

Often the settlers gathered together to help each other. In the fall, the settlers helped each other pick crops. When the harvest was done, they worked together to remove the husks, or outer covering, from ears of corn. Then the cornhusks could be used to weave baskets and stuff mattresses. Sometimes a group of settlers would gather to help a family build a cabin or raise a barn.

After gathering together to work, the settlers then would have fun together. They would play music, sing, play games, and dance.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**pioneer** *noun*, one of the first of a group of people to enter or settle a region

**fort** *noun*, a structure designed to defend against attacks



### After You Read

**REVIEW** What crops did Tennessee settlers grow?

Circle the four main crops the Tennessee settlers grew.

**REVIEW** What customs, celebrations, and traditions did the settlers have?

Highlight five sentences that tell about the customs, celebrations, and traditions that the settlers had.