The Scots-Irish Arrive

**Key Question** Why did the Backcountry begin at the fall line?

In the South, the Backcountry began at the fall line, where waterfalls prevent large boats from moving upriver. West of the fall line is the broad plateau known as the Piedmont. The Piedmont lies at the foot of the Appalachians.

**Early Settlers** The first Europeans in the Backcountry arrived to trade with the Native Americans. Farmers soon followed but clashed with Native Americans over land. The Backcountry gained a reputation as a wild place, where independent settlers fought with Native Americans and resented government control.

After a Mass Migration

“Scots-Irish” was the name given to people who came from the borders of Scotland and England. Many were Presbyterian Scots who had lived for a time in northern Ireland. Both Northern Ireland and the Scottish borders were troubled regions, torn by warfare.

This hostile environment gave the Scots-Irish survival skills that were useful in the American Backcountry.

In the early 1700s, the Scots-Irish suffered drought, rent increases, and persecution by the Anglican church. As a result, the Scots-Irish sailed to America by the thousands.

Like the English Puritans and the German settlers in Pennsylvania, the Scots-Irish traveled in family groups. But Scots-Irish families formed much larger clans. Clans are large groups of families that claim a common ancestor. Clan members were fiercely loyal to one another and banded together when danger threatened. The clan system helped families deal with the perils of the Backcountry.

The Scots-Irish came to Pennsylvania because of its religious tolerance. They were settled on the colony’s frontier. From there they spread through the frontiers of other colonies until they occupied the entire Backcountry.

**Heritage of the Scots-Irish** In the Backcountry the Scots-Irish developed a unique culture. It was here that the music of Scotland and Ireland slowly...
changed into Bluegrass and American Country Music. Many sports that are now part of track and field competitions also came from the Scots-Irish.

The Scots-Irish reinforced the desire for democracy and freedom that had already been established in earlier colonies. Their loyalty and warrior ethic also had a long-lasting influence on the American military. Their constant migrations may have helped create that unique sense of restless energy in American life.

Regionalisms Develop  Between 1700 and 1750, the population of England’s colonies in North America doubled and then doubled again. At the start of the century, the colonial population stood at about 251,000. By 1750, they were more than 1,170,000 settlers in North America. These settlers lived in four major regions that were already developing unique characteristics. The chart below describes these different colonial regions and shows how they were able to grow and prosper.

**DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION: TIERED ACTIVITIES**

**OBJECTIVE**  Create a class mural showing differences among the four colonial regions.

**Basic**

Have students create a class mural with four sections—one for each colonial region. Have students work in groups to identify one major characteristic of each region and then illustrate it. Ask students to list words describing each region around the illustrations.

**On Level**

Have students label the four sections of the class mural: *New England, Middle Colonies, Southern Colonies, and Backcountry*. Have students work in pairs to identify two major characteristics of each region and then illustrate them on the mural. Ask students to add captions describing similarities and differences among the regions.

**Challenge**

Have students work individually to identify at least two major characteristics for each region and then illustrate them on the mural. Ask students to add captions describing similarities and differences among the regions.

**CONNECT to the Essential Question**

**What factors allowed each colonial region to grow and prosper?**

Ask students what they have learned so far that can help them answer this question. Use the graphic on p. 119 or display the transparency.

**CRITICAL THINKING ANSWER**

**Compare and Contrast**  Possible Answer: the Backcountry, since most people were poor farmers.

**Teacher-Tested Activities**

Robert Sisko, Carteret Middle School, Carteret, New Jersey

I divided my class into four small groups and assigned each group one of the four colonial regions.

- I told my students that they were news teams at the scene of an event that occurred in their region.
- Their assignment was to give a two-minute oral presentation about this event—answering the questions *Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.*
- My students enjoyed giving themselves “pen names” by combining their first names with the last name of a colonial historical figure.
Beyond the Frontier

**KEY QUESTION** How did English colonial growth affect other groups?

As Backcountry settlers pushed west they came into contact with various Native American peoples, as well as French and Spanish colonists. As contact increased, so did conflict over land and resources.

**Contact Brings Conflict** Native Americans found themselves caught in between advancing French and English colonists. The French had colonized eastern Canada and the territory along the Mississippi River. French fur traders did not want English settlers interfering with their trade. One Native American told an Englishman, “You and the French are like the two edges of a pair of shears, and we are the cloth that is cut to pieces between them.”

Tensions over land claims often led to war. In 1753 a young officer named George Washington was sent to ask the French to leave the Ohio River Valley, an act which led to the French and Indian War.

Spain also controlled large western areas of North America. Spanish settlers were farmers, ranchers and priests. Priests, who established missions to convert Native Americans, built forts near the missions. In 1718, Spaniards built Fort San Antonio de Bexar to guard the mission of San Antonio de Valero, later renamed the Alamo.

England’s colonies often had to unite against these other groups. As a result, an American identity began to form.

**CAUSES AND EFFECTS** Explain how English colonial growth affected other groups in North America.

---

**TERMS & NAMES**

1. Appalachian Mountains, p. 117; Scots-Irish, p. 118

**USING YOUR READING NOTES**

2. Compare and Contrast Use the diagram below to contrast Backcountry life with life in the other colonies.

**KEY IDEAS**

3. What were some cultural characteristics of Backcountry settlers?

4. Why did conflict sometimes develop between English colonists and the other peoples of North America?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

5. Make Inferences How did the clan system help the Scots-Irish survive?

6. Analyze Point of View How might the Native Americans have felt as increasing numbers of colonists and trappers invaded their lands?

7. Summarize In what ways did the experiences of the Scots-Irish in the British Isles help prepare them for life on the American frontier?

8. Art Research the geography of the Backcountry. Draw a map of the routes that colonists might have taken to settle this region.

---

**Art Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>excellent; creatively illustrates several features of the Backcountry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>good; shows some features of the Backcountry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>fair; shows few features of the Backcountry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>poor; shows no features of the Backcountry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT ANSWERS**

**Terms & Names**

1. Appalachian Mountains, p. 117; Scots-Irish, p. 118

**Using Your Reading Notes**

2. Possible Answers: Backcountry Life—many resources, resentment of government control; Common Features—desire for democracy and freedom; Life in Other Colonies—support for representative government

**Key Ideas**

3. Backcountry settlers were independent and fiercely loyal to one another. They yearned for freedom, were restless, and constantly moved west.

4. Increased contact led to more conflict over land.

**Critical Thinking**

5. Clan loyalty caused people to help one another so they could survive in a dangerous environment.

6. They might have felt trapped, helpless, or angry.

7. Possible Answer: Their homelands were torn by warfare, which prepared them for fighting to protect themselves on a dangerous frontier.

8. Maps might include trails through thick forests, along waterfalls near the fall line, and across the Piedmont. Use the rubric to score students’ maps.