

Home Life School Tours Vocabulary List

New words to go with the new experiences for your students are a part of your Cracker Country visit. Help get the most out of your field trip by reading the following vocabulary words with your students prior to your tour.

General Terms

Abacus – a counting device consisting of a frame holding parallel rods strung with movable beads; used in a 19th century school house to help teach arithmetic.

Ash Hopper – a wooden container used as a filter. It is filled with hardwood ashes, water is poured over the ashes and drips out of the bottom bringing lye (used in soap making) with it.

Candle – a wax or tallow cylinder with an embedded wick that is burned for illumination.

Churn – a device in which cream is beaten vigorously to make butter; can be made of wood or pottery.

Corn – a vegetable that grows on stalks, bearing kernels on large ears.

Cream – the high fat part of milk that is skimmed from the surface of the milk and used to make butter.

Crib – a building used for the storage and drying of corn.

Dipper Gourd – a long handled gourd (a vine grown inedible, hard rind fruit) that has an opening cut into it; it is used to dip water for drinking or washing.

Folk Music – music that comes from the common people; it is learned and played in an informal way.

Folk Instrument – any instrument that lends itself to folk music traditions; i.e. an instrument that can be self-taught or learned informally and is often, though not always, built by the person playing it.

Gall Berry Bush – a native shrub, the limbs of which are used for making brooms to sweep the yard of a cabin.

Heart Pine – wood from the center, or heart, of a long leaf pine; heart pine lumber is an excellent building material due to the high resin content of its sap which gives it a natural resistance to decay and insect damage.

Hearth – the flat bottom of the fireplace where a fire is built; the fire in the hearth is a source of illumination, warmth against chill and heat for cooking.

Hoop – a round wooden or metal band used in barrel making; a discarded hoop could be used as a toy.

Lamp – a vessel holding liquid fuel that is burned through a wick for illumination.



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Lard – pig fat that has been rendered (boiled to remove impurities) and is used in cooking, soap making and candle making.

Livestock – the collective term for the animals found on a farm, i.e. horses, mules, cattle, pigs, chickens, etc.

Lye – a caustic salt that can be used to make soap. Lye is procured by dripping water through hardwood ashes gathered from the hearth.

Paraffin – a waxy white or colorless substance derived from petroleum and used to make candles, lubricants and sealing materials. Paraffin takes the place of tallow in candle making.

Pitcher Pump – a hand operated water pump shaped like a pitcher.

Rope Winder – a hand cranked machine used to twist several pieces of twine into rope.

Tallow – hard fat rendered from cattle, sheep and in the South especially from pigs; used in making soap, candles and lubricants.

Wick – a fiber core in the center of a candle; this is the part of the candle that is burned for illumination.

Terms Specific to Fall Tours

Cane Mill – a device with crushing rollers used to squeeze the juice from stalks of sugar cane to make cane syrup. A mules or oxen were the common power sources for the mill.

Sugar Cane – a type of grass that grows in tall, thick stalks and is harvested throughout late fall and winter for its juice used in making syrup and sugar.

Syrup Kettle – a large cast iron pot used to boil cane juice down into syrup.

Terms Specific to Spring Tours

Cotton – a shrub grown in warm climates for the soft, white fibers surrounding its seed.

Hoe – a garden implement with a long handle and a thin, flat blade that is used to break up and move soil.

Forge – a hearth where metals are heated and wrought, especially as in a blacksmith shop.

