

History

PREHISTORIC INDIANS

The original Americans entered North America over 14,000 years ago. They moved across a land bridge connecting Siberia to Alaska. This land bridge, known as “Beringia”, is now under water. The groups that crossed the land bridge eventually spread all the way to South America. These Native Americans developed a variety of distinctly different cultures.

The Mark Twain National Forest has cultural resources dating back to Paleo-Indian times, prior to 10,000 B.C. The Llano is the oldest culture of the Paleo-Indian period (12,000 – 8,000 B.C.). Clovis points and mammoths most often define this culture. Clovis points have been reported on the Houston/Rolla, Ava, Doniphan/Eleven Point and Poplar Bluff District areas. The Llano culture existed from 10,000 to 9,000 B.C. The Folsom culture follows it from 9,000 to 8,000 B.C. and is defined by Folsom points and big-horned bison. Folsom points have been reported in the Houston/Rolla region. The next culture takes us from the Paleo-Indian period to the Early Archaic period. Leaf-shaped points identify the Plano culture. Plano point types are rare in Missouri, possibly because they were supplanted by the Dalton culture (8,000-7,000 B.C.). These three cultures were small, family group bands that lived nomadic lifestyles. As the Paleo-Indian culture moves toward the Archaic, the social makeup of the groups becomes more and more complex.

The Dalton Period of occupation occurred during the transition from Paleo-Indian to Archaic time periods. They collected nuts, berries, and seeds. They also trapped and ate small animal like raccoons and squirrels. Dalton arrowheads are common in the Houston/Rolla region.

The Archaic Period (7,000 – 1,000 B.C.) is divided into three parts: Early, Middle, and Late. During the Early Archaic Period, reliance on vegetables and fruits increases and the people begin to fish with traps and nets. Semi nomadism begins, and caves or rock

shelters become semi-permanent homes. Family-based groups still dominated the social organization of bands. During the Middle Archaic the climate began to change and a drier, more hospitable climate evolved. Social organization was the same as Early Archaic. New tools were used, such as grooved axes, and fabrics and sandals are apparent for the first time. The Late Archaic Period brought warm and dry weather to the Ozarks. Tools reflect gathering and hunting. Settlements become seasonal. The trend of food production develops as the social organization grows more complex. Division of labor and codes of behavior become more rigid.

The Woodland Period (1,000 B.C. – 900 A.D.) is a period of technological and social advancement. The people are sedentary by the end of this period. Crops begin to be grown and the bow and arrow comes into use. Cooking and storing water brings the Woodland Indians closer to the village farming life.

The Mississippi Period (900 – 1700 A.D.) brings us from the beginning of village-based culture to European contact and settlement. The social organization of this period is based on a highly stratified religious society. This period also sees the introduction of culture and people of the South into what would become Missouri.

The Mississippian culture began to decline before European contact. DeSoto's 1540 expedition into southern Missouri affected the social structure because he killed many village rulers. His presence caused further disruption due to the diseases his men brought into the region. This social disruption led to the decline and disappearance of the Mississippian culture.

HISTORIC INDIANS

Historic Indian tribes include those groups that were here when the Europeans arrived in North America. These groups are known by names that the Europeans called them. The names were usually a European pronunciation of the actual Native American word or

phrase. Indian cultures that existed before the Europeans arrived are called prehistoric because they predate the historic Indian groups.

In Missouri, the two primary historic Indian tribes were the “Missouri” and the “Osage”. They dominated the area from at least the early 1700s to the early 1800s. Of these two tribes, the Osage were more dominant in southern Missouri, including parts of what is now the Mark Twain National Forest. They were an organized tribe when they came into contact with the French explorers and settlers in the early 1700s. These Europeans are the source of much of the early information about the historic Osage.

Osage settlements were permanent villages, organized according to the political affiliation of each clan present. Agriculture and farming were developed while gathering still occurred. Hunting seemed to be the most important means of getting food for the Osage. Emigrant Indian groups from the East moved to and through Missouri as the European settlers claimed more and more land. Eventually, the Osage and the emigrant Indians ceded their Missouri lands and moved further west. The Osage left in 1923.

EARLY TIMBER INDUSTRY

Around 1870, the citizens of Missouri had begun to use natural resources for profit. Timber mills flourished and vast forests of pine and oak were leveled, sawed, sold and shipped. Over-fishing of streams was common (dynamite became a new fishing tool) and an almost total annihilation of game turned the land lean. By the 1930's the lumber mills were gone as were the forests and game. Soil erosion and water pollution had begun due to the clear-cutting, slash-burning, and continued farming of slopes. This was the condition of the land when the forest service began restoration in the early 30's.

When the Great Depression rolled across the United States, thousands of young, unemployed men joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). CCC camps were established in the newly formed national forests. During the 10 years the Civilian Conservation Corps was active, Corpsmen planted thousands of acres trees, built fire

lanes, and constructed recreational facilities across the national forests. Much of their work is still evident.

FOREST SERVICE

Mark Twain National Forest was established by Presidential Proclamation on September 11, 1939. The 1.5 million acres of land that make up the Mark Twain National Forest spans the southern half of Missouri. Total forest acreage represents 11% of all forested land in Missouri. Mark Twain National Forest has land in 29 Missouri counties. The area is diverse in vegetation, geological features, water resources, and wildlife. It includes seven federally designated wildernesses and numerous historical and archaeological sites.

Mark Twain NF Supervisor's Office is located in Rolla, MO. There are six Ranger Districts on the forest with offices in Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs, Doniphan, Winona, Fredericktown, Houston, Van Buren, Salem, Potosi, Poplar Bluff, Houston, Rolla and Cedar Creek.

Heritage

Potosi/Fredericktown District

Silver Mines-

Silver Mines is located at the site of a historic mining operation. Mining started in 1877 and in 1879 a dam was constructed across the St. Francis River to divert the river to a turbine that powered machinery for hoisting and crushing ore. A planned company town was laid out with a post office, school, blacksmith shop, and several stores on the hill near the mine. Although mining operations ceased after only a few years, the total production recorded was about 50 tons of lead and 3,000 ounces of silver. The mine reopened in 1916 and operated sporadically until 1946.

This area is also an archeological treasure as home to a variety of Native American cultures. Heavy prehistoric use between 2,000 B.C. and 1,200 A.D. has

been noted. Former excavation sites are scattered throughout the area. These sites are on federally owned property and are protected by federal law. They should not be disturbed.

Houston/Rolla/Cedar Creek District

Nevins Homestead-

The Columbus Nevins farmstead was acquired by the Forest Service in 1982. The land and structures were the home of Columbus from the time he was born in 1909. It was purchased by John and Sarah Hudson in 1856 and sold to Baxter Nevins, Sr. in 1905. His son, Columbus, lived there from birth until 1982. During the 1900's the Nevins family saw changes in the landscape, fought for civil rights and education, and witnessed an improvement in race relations. The history of the Nevins farmstead is the story of a black family, their rise from slavery, and their connection to the land they owned.

Salem District

Nova Scotia-

The Nova Scotia town site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. From 1880 to 1885 this town was the location of the largest iron furnace in Missouri and a town of 2,000. The MTNF and Historic Preservation Associates have conducted a series of excavations at the site. The results of these excavations are a compilation of a company history, mapping the industrial district and cemetery, cataloging findings at a worker's house, superintendent's house, and in an upper class residential district. Nova Scotia is a well-preserved snapshot of life in the late 19th century Ozarks.

Doniphan/Eleven Point District

Falling Spring Mill-

The first house built at Falling Spring was a log cabin, which is still standing. This house is over 100 years old. There have been two mills at Falling Spring. The first one used a wooden water wheel. The second is the present mill. This mill was built between 1927 and 1929. At first, only the main support timbers were up; later, the mill was enclosed in the present building. The mill wheel came from what is known as Johnson Spring. It was used to make electricity before power was brought in by the government.

Eleven Point River-

The Eleven Point River has been recognized and loved for its rich history and outstanding scenic beauty since early settlement days. In 1968 Congress established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A 44-mile portion of the Eleven Point, free of impoundments and with a largely undeveloped shoreline and

watershed, qualified as a National Scenic River. This portion between Thomasville, Missouri, and Highway 142 Bridge became one of the eight initial units of the system.

Alternating stretches of rapids and deep, clear pools wind around moss-covered boulders and shading bottomland hardwood trees. River birch is abundant along the shore and aged sycamores lean out across the river from their shoreline moorings. Barely more than a stream at its upper reaches near Thomasville, it gains width and depth as it proceeds southeastward. Springs pouring from dolomite bluffs or rushing up from a vast network of underground flow systems provide a continuous source of water and beauty.

Turner Mill-

Access to this historic mill can be found from the Eleven Point River near Road 3190. At the southern access site there are boat launch areas and picnic facilities for day use. At the north access is the site of the community that once existed there. The town contained a general store, post office, school, Turners Mill, several houses and a population of almost 50. The mill operated from the 1850's to the early 1900's.

The Narrows-

The Narrows is a name that describes the ridge of land that separates Frederick Creek on the west from the Eleven Point River. Here four large springs flow in excess of one hundred million gallons per day. Located here at the Narrows are Blue, Morgan, Sullivan, and Jones Springs. Access to the springs is by foot travel only. The area's unusual aquatic growth, the geologic formation, scenic quality, and surrounding waters formed by Frederick Creek and the Eleven Point River add to its unique beauty.

Greer Mill-

When Captain Samuel W. Greer returned home from the Civil War to Oregon, County he found that Bushwhackers had burned the grist mill at Greer Spring. He rebuilt it and began milling operations immediately. About 1870 he built a dam at the spring, installed a turbine water wheel and built a three-story mill house that extended over part of the spring branch. Here he installed machinery to grind corn, saw timber and lumber, gin cotton, and card wool. It was necessary to convey logs and grain down a rough, steep hill and back up again as finished products. Ox-drawn carts and wagons were used for this purpose. Much attention was attracted by a team of oxen trained to make these trips without a driver. In 1899 Greer completed a new mill on top of the hill and brought power up from the spring through an ingenious system of cables and wheels, and his trained team of oxen was needed no more. The old and present sites of Greer Mill are on private land.

Greer Spring-

Greer Spring is the second largest spring in Missouri (average daily flow is 214 million gallons) and the largest on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) property. Greer Spring feeds into the Eleven Point River. It is one of the most beautiful and powerful wild springs in the country. The outlet of Greer Spring is a powerful boil of water that issues from a cavern, then plunges through a rock filled gorge to the Eleven Point River. It contributes about 60% of the total flow of the Eleven Point River below the spring branch. A gentle, sloping trail to and from the spring accommodates the thousands of visitors per year.

CCC

In March of 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented his proposal for the Emergency Conservation Work Act, known more commonly as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), to the 73rd Congress. The President proposed that the 35 – 99% of unemployed young men suffering due to the depression could be employed by the government to waylay destruction and erosion of U.S. natural resources. He asked for emergency powers that would allow him to put 250,000 men in work camps in just four months. The Army, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, and the Department of Labor were all involved in recruiting, coordinating, organizing, and mobilizing the CCC work force. In the area that would later become Mark Twain National Forest, hundreds of young men at over fifty CCC sites worked at building roads and planting numerous acres of pine to preserve and enhance the natural resources of southern Missouri.

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