

**Exploring Rural Kentucky Through Documentary Art:
Creelsboro Landing, 1890s - Documentary Art Interactive
Unit 1 - Lesson Set 1 - Rafting Logs
- For the Student -**

BACKGROUND READING

One of the attractions of the Creelsboro Valley for early settlers was the richness of natural resources. Old-growth forests provided timber for constructing homes, barns, stores, and other buildings.

Timber was so abundant, it became the valley's first cash crop. Many rural communities found it difficult to export their timber, but residents in the Creelsboro Valley had an advantage – access to the Cumberland River.

Even before the invention of steamboats that could travel both downriver and upriver, inland waterways provided transportation for people and their goods. Sometimes people used flatboats.

Logs, however, float – so loggers could tie the logs together to make rafts, and then pole them downstream. This was such an economical method that even after steamboats began to ply the rivers, logs were still floated downriver as rafts.



A log raft (rough cut timber, tied together) floats downstream - a detail from Creelsboro Landing, 1890s by Dennis Thrasher (2018).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After reading the **BACKGROUND READING**, consider these questions:

1. The abundance of timber was a natural resource that impacted the settlement and economic development of Creelsboro. Can you identify a natural resource that impacted the settlement and economic development of your community?
2. Access to the Cumberland River was a geographic feature that impacted the development of Creelsboro. Can you identify a geographic feature that impacted the development of your own community?

After examining the vignette, consider these questions:

1. What is happening in this vignette? What do you see that makes you think that?
2. What season is represented in this painting. How can you tell?
3. What appears to be the weather and the conditions on the river? How can you tell?
4. Why might these elements be important to accurately representing the activity?