



Pioneer Textiles is the second episode in *The Virtual Living Archaeology Weekend Video Series*, produced by Voyageur Media Group, Inc. for the Living Archaeology Weekend (LAW) Steering Committee. The video features archaeologist Wayna Roach, Heritage Program manager, Daniel Boone National Forest, who explains how archaeological and archival sources document textile use and production. The video also features Living Archaeology Weekend demonstrator Jo Ann Oborski, a spinner and weaver, who introduces the spinning and weaving technologies of early Euro-American settlers during the frontier period in eastern Kentucky.

Archaeologist: Wayna Roach, Archaeologist, Heritage Program Manager, Daniel Boone National Forest, U.S. Forest Service

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski, Demonstrator, Living Archaeology Weekend

Location A: Home office, Lexington, Kentucky

Location B: Montgomery County History Museum, 36 Broadway, Mt. Sterling, Kentucky

Production: Voyageur Media Group, Inc. Producer Tom Law, Videographer Beth Fowler

Post: Matt Davis, EditFreak

Distribution: LAW website (free streaming video), and other public media outlets



OVERVIEW

Times	Segment
00:25	Open
00:82	A: Introduction
03:95	B: Cultural Context
02:53	C: Textile Resources
03:59	D: Spinning and Weaving Technologies
02:41	E: Reflections
01:45	Credits
15:00	Total time

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS SCRIPT

BM – British Museum
DBNF – Daniel Boone National Forest
KAS – Kentucky Archaeological Survey
KET – Kentucky Educational Television
KHS – Kentucky Historical Society
LOC – Library of Congress
LPL – Lexington Public Library
NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NYPL – New York Public Library
SOT – sound on tape
WSWMA-UK – William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology, University of Kentucky
VGM – Voyageur Media Group, Inc.
YUAG – Yale University Art Gallery

Open: 00:25 seconds

Series Title sequence

Scene LAW/ PIO-01: (0:25 seconds)

The Virtual Living Archaeology Weekend Video Series

Video: Series title presented as 2D animation of *flowing river* over buckskin background with a *timeline* montage of images from prior LAW events. Series title settles into position as upper third.

Audio: Theme music: *Overseas* by Vlad Gluschenko, Creative Commons.

Graphics: LAW logo, petroglyph turtle.

Section A: Introduction: 00:82 seconds

Scene LAW/ PIO-02: (00:10 seconds)

Episode title

The Virtual Living Archaeology Weekend Video Series

Pioneer Textiles

with

Wayna Roach and Jo Ann Oborski

Video: Episode title.

Audio: Episode music: Pond5, *Inspirational Acoustic Background* by Inspiring Audio.

Graphics: Series title as smaller element with turtle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-03: (00:35 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

Welcome to the second episode in *The Virtual Living Archaeology Weekend Video Series*. In this episode, weaver Jo Ann Oborski and archaeologist Wayna Roach describe how Kentucky's pioneers created 'homespun' textiles. You'll learn how flax and wool were turned into fabrics. You'll see the skills needed to use a walking wheel, a castle wheel, and a loom. And you'll discover why pioneer textile technologies are important to archaeologists, historians, contemporary weavers, and to you.

Video: Video of Jo Ann Oborski and Wayna Roach. Close ups of flax and wool. Image of linen, wool yarn and homespun linsey-woolsey textile or clothing. Video of Jo Ann demonstrating three technologies. Painting: *Spinning by Firelight – The Boyhood of George Washington Gray* by Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1894 (YUAG). Video of Christina Pappas at loom, Gladie Cabin Visitor Center. Box loom demonstration at LAW event (KET video). Spinning wheel close-up at LAW event (KET video). Photo: Jo Ann Oborski at LAW event.

Audio: Intro music continues.

Graphics: Series title as smaller element with turtle.

Section B: Cultural Context: 03:95 minutes

Scene LAW/ PIO-04: (00:20 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

The roots of textile technology run deep in Kentucky. Eighteenth century pioneers brought with them age-old textile traditions developed and refined by their ancestors over thousands of years. These spinning and weaving skills were essential to every family.

Video: Artwork: B&W sketch, *Settlers Crossing the Alleghenies* by William Ladd Taylor, 1903 (Wallach Division Picture Collection, NYPL). Textile migration montage: world image (NASA); textile images from France, Wales, Ireland and Scotland (BM), and colonial spinning (NYPL). Lithograph, *Pioneer Home on the Western frontier*, Currier & Ives, 1867 (LOC).

Audio: Music: *Cumberland Gap*, old-time banjo by Eli Bedel, VMG.

Graphics: Kentucky Frontier Period, ca. 1770 to 1820.

Scene LAW/ PIO-05: (00:23 seconds)

Interview: Jo Ann Oborski

"Textiles were a very important part of your life. It kept you warm. The men would have continued to hunt, and there would have been leather used. But the textile itself - you needed that. So, you had to figure out how to put those fibers together so that it kept you warm and dry, not sick."

Video: Oborski on camera. Artwork: *Spirit of America* by David Wright.

Audio: Music: none.

Graphics: Name key: Jon Ann Oborski, Demonstrator, Living Archaeology Weekend.

Scene LAW/ PIO-06: (00:14 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

The production of textiles took an incredible amount of time and labor for families living on the frontier. Today, scholars are using a variety of resources to better understand the intricacies of pioneer textiles.

Video: Artwork: *A Home in the Wilderness*, Currier & Ives (LOC). Oborski and Roach conducting research.

Audio: Music: Pond5, *Investigation* – Science Research by MV Productions.

Graphics:

Scene LAW/ PIO-07: (00:34 seconds)

Interview: Wayna Roach

“So, an historic archaeologist is going to use a combination of historic document research, field work, followed by lab work to investigate frontier period or pioneer sites. Frontier sites can include fort sites, like Boonesborough. They are also called stations, such as Bryan’s Station or Morgan’s Station. Toward the end of the period, people started to be able to leave those forts and leave those stations. And they could start to begin their own farms and establish their own cabins.”

Video: Wayna Roach on camera. Three panel GFX: a) Map of Kentucky from John Filson, 1784 (LOC); b) photo of fieldwork at Ft. Boonesborough (Nancy O'Malley, WSWMA-UK); c) Christina Pappas conducting lab work (Chris Pappas). Lantern slide: Fort Boonesborough and Unknown Station (KHS). Artwork: *Pioneer Home*, Currier & Ives (LOC).

Audio: Pond5, *Investigation* – Science Research by MV Productions.

Graphics: Name Key: Wayna Roach, Archaeologist and Heritage Program Manager, Daniel Boone National Forest. Image IDs.

Scene LAW/ PIO-08: (01:16 seconds)

Interview: Wayna Roach

“Evidence of textiles at Kentucky’s frontier sites is elusive. It can only be preserved in very special context and those special contexts can be when the cloth is in contact with metal that corrodes. Other special contexts where cloth can be preserved include environments where it has been wet and has stayed wet, such as a well. There are other artifacts that can suggest the presence of cloth. One of the more common artifacts found would be thimbles. Pins can be harder to find because they’re very small. They are also made out of metal which corrodes easily. Sewing needles can also be found.”

“So, textiles aren’t commonly found at archaeological sites both because the cloth just doesn’t preserve well, but also because people worked very hard to make every inch of cloth that they had and wore and used during the frontier period. And therefore, because they had to work so hard to make the cloth, they generally used it and used it and used it, and it’s not -- it wouldn’t be surprising to me if the cloth simply fell apart when they were finally done with it.”

Video: Artwork: Fort Harrod, KY (KHS). Wayna Roach on camera. Metal preserved textiles; twill button, State Monument, Frankfort Cemetery, KY (KAS). Wet preserved textiles; mourning scarf, State Monument, Frankfort, KY (Jay Stottman). Artwork: Well at Bryan's Station, KY, 1782 (KHS). Frontier period artifacts: McGary's Station, Mercer County, KY (KAS); McCutchen-Downey Graveyard, Simpson County, KY (Darlene Applegate). Linsey-woolsey sample, Jo Ann Oborski. Artwork: Spinning and weaving (NYPL). Lantern slide: Mountain Family, Elmer Foote Collection (LPL).

Audio: music continues.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Scene LAW/ PIO-09: (01:30 seconds)

Interview: Jo Ann Oborski

"Little girls frequently started being handed some wool or something to work with about the time they were three. By the time a girl was five, six, they started her to learn to spin. By the time she was nine she knew how to spin whatever mom wanted."

"Little boys did not get to miss out on this. They learned to weave about the time they were seven. That was when their arms were long enough to reach the beater bar and their legs could reach the treadles. It was not that they were going to be a weaver. Heavens, no! That wasn't going to happen, but when a young man found a young lady that he wanted to get married, he had to build everything in their cabin, and the hardest thing for him to make was going to be the loom. So, if he had sat and worked on the loom and understood all the parts and pieces of why it had to do what it had to do, he would be able to make one."

Video: Oborski on camera. Artwork: Woman and daughter spinning (NYPL). Spinning (LOC). Painting: *Spinning by Firelight – The Boyhood of George Washington Gray* by Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1894 (YUAG). Video: Oborski operating loom. Photos: Gladie Cabin exterior and loom, and loom inside Gladie Visitor Center (DBNF).

Audio: Music: *Lazy John*, fiddle by Eli Bedel, VMG.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Section C: Textile Resources: 02:53 minutes

Scene LAW/ PIO-10: (00:10 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

Pioneer families made textiles primarily from two resources – flax and wool.

Video: Artwork: *Carolina Home* by W.P. Snyder, 1880 (Wallach Collection, NYPL). Video: flax and wool.

Audio: *Dulcimer (Proud)* - instrumental by Eli Bedel, VMG.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Scene LAW/ PIO-11: (00:14 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"The early pioneers brought flax in the forms of seed, and not immediately, but pretty soon after they came here, they would have brought in sheep."

Video: Jo Ann Oborski on camera. Video: flax seeds, and Cheviot sheep from Jeff Becker's farm.

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Scene LAW/ PIO-12: (00:10 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

Flax is a plant that has been used to make clothing for over 30,000 years. Its fibers are made into a textile called *linen*.

Video: flax field, Pond5. Overlays: Flax plant biological sketch (NYPL). Egyptian flax (NYPL). Video: linen, Pond5.

Audio: none.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Scene LAW/ PIO-13: (01:07 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"This is the flax plant. It grows to about 36 inches - takes 100 to 110 days to reach maturity. And you can see the flax fiber right there. It grows right underneath this rough outer stem. So, this is ready to be processed."

The first thing that I would do would be to take something that I can break the fibers on the outside of this. Once you had the outer part broken, you would lash it down on these - these are called hackles. And you would drag the flax through there. And they will rip the woody part off and leave you with the flax in your hand."

"This is flax that has been broken. You could be used to make a bag or something of that sort. And, then your flax here. It's been combed and carded, and everything has been done. It's ready to go. It's ready to be spun."

Video: Demo of flax preparation. Photo or video: flax/cane break. Video: breaking flax, Slovenia, Pond5. Video of Jo Ann Oborski flax combing with hackles.

Audio: SOT.

Graphics: Flax section subtitle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-14: (01:10 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"This is a Rambouillet fleece. So, this fleece is ready to be washed, and carded and combed and worked into yarn. What they would do is that they would put these combs in these frames. And this would have been held down so that it couldn't move. You would have loaded your combs with wool. And you would have taken this comb and been pulling it through and onto this comb."

"This is a card. And you would load this onto your cards. Let's just put a little of this on. And you just gently comb down to straighten this wool out. Children started out at age three to four, and they would help mom by carding the fleece so that she could spin it then."

Video: Demo of wool preparation. Video: Jo Ann carding wool. Photo: Woman and child carding wool, 1900s, Elmer Foote Collection (LPL).

Audio: SOT.

Graphics: Wool section subtitle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-15: (00:18 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

Each textile had special qualities. Linen made from flax was strong and durable. Yarn from wool was warm and pliable. When combined, the two made a strong and warm "homespun" textile known as *linsey-woolsey*.

Video: flax fibers, wool yarn. Video: Oborski using box loom to make linsey-woolsey. Linsey-woolsey sample.

Audio: Music: Pond5, *Ambient Reflective Upright Piano* by AudioKraken.

Graphics: Image IDs.

Section D: Spinning and Weaving Technologies: 03:59 minutes

Scene LAW/ PIO-16: (00:24 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

For thousands of years, humans produced yarn with suspended spindles. In time, hand tools became mechanized, including the spinning and weaving technologies used by Kentucky's pioneers.

Video: Oborski demonstrating drop spindle. Photo: log cabin interior with spinning and weaving technologies, Fort Harrod (Willard Rouse Jillson Collection, KY Geologic Survey, KHS).

Audio: *Bowling Green*, banjo instrumental by Eli Bedel, VMG.

Graphics:

Scene LAW/ PIO-17: (01:25 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"This is a walking wheel. It is a Virginia wheel based on the way it is produced, or the table on it - the length of the legs and so on. There's two ways to spin wool, and this one is called spinning woolen, which is what this wheel does. It allows a lot more air to be in the fiber as you were spinning it. So, the yarn is softer. It has a tendency to be not be quite so strong. It will pill. But it's got a lot of air hooked and trapped in it. So, it's much warmer. So, the yarn I'm spinning is going to be fine and small. So, a woman might have used this for making socks or knitting underwear, long johns, things like that."

"So, I'm spinning off a triangle here on my fingers. I want that triangle to just keep right on coming. And we're going to hold it very, very gently. [edit] Now, back to the axle. We'll pinch it off. Put a little more twist in it, back it up, put it on, bring it off the end. And we're ready – kind of ready – to go again. Think of walking twenty to twenty-five miles a year beside this thing, spinning your wool."

Video: Demo of walking wheel.

Audio: Pond5, *Ambient Reflective Upright Piano* by AudioKraken.

Graphics: Walking Wheel section subtitle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-18: (00:33 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"This is a castle wheel. It was made primarily for spinning flax, or linen. When you're doing this, you wanted to spin it wet. I have my fiber – my flax – here on my distaff. That's what this thing is called. And, when I spin it and it has come in and it lands on the bobbin here it miraculously becomes linen."

Video: Demo of castle wheel.

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: Castle Wheel section subtitle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-19: (01:34 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"This is a barn beam or a barn frame loom. Two different ways of saying the name. Two different thoughts. Basically, the left-over timber from when they got done making the barn went into making a loom. The other is that when you are not using it the cabin, you would tear it down and put it up in the rafters of the barn. Most reading that I can find is that once it was set up, they never took these things down. It was just too much work to put 'em back up."

"The main thing with your loom is that it holds tension on your thread that comes from the back to the front. In other words, warp. Then, the weft is the threads that goes sideways – across."

Video: Oborski on camera. Artwork: *Scenes of Emigrant Life* by Paul Frenzeny, 1875 (Wallach Division Picture Collection, NYPL). Video of barn beam loom, Gladie Visitor Center (DBNF).

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: Barn Beam or Frame Loom section subtitle.

Scene LAW/ PIO-20: (00:20 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

Over the next century, textiles became a major American industry. Woolen and cotton mills were established throughout the nation, including Kentucky. However, in more remote areas, families continued to rely on traditional spinning and weaving technologies well into the 1900s.

Artwork: Textile industry (LOC). Textile mills, Lowell, MA, 1800s (LOC). Postcard: Mayfield Woolen Mills, Graves County, KY (KHS). Photo: Grahamton Textile Mill, Meade County, KY (LOC). Photo: Woman with spinning wheel in eastern Kentucky, 1919 (Morgan Collection, KHS).

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: KY timeline: Frontier Period (ca. 1770 to 1820), Antebellum Period (ca. 1820 to 1861), Civil War Period (1861-1865), Postbellum Period (1865 to 1914).

Section E: Reflections: 02:41 minutes

Scene LAW/ PIO-21: (00:32 seconds)

Narrator: Dr. Erika Brady

The work of archaeologists, historians and weavers tells the story of an important part of Kentucky's cultural heritage. During the frontier period, pioneers adapted existing traditions to make homespun textiles from flax and wool. They used time-honored technologies to create warm, durable clothing for everyday life and social events. And they passed on this essential knowledge to future generations, helping them prosper in a new country.

Video: Demonstrators with technologies. Linsey-woolsey sample. Artwork: Pioneer Home (LOC). Sunday school (LOC). Postcard: Family spinning on porch, 1911 (Morgan Collection, KHS).

Audio: Music: *Coleman's March* by Eli Bedel, VMG.

Graphics: Image IDs (optional).

Scene LAW/ PIO-22: (00:40 seconds)

Interview: Archaeologist Wayna Roach

"Archaeology can change the way we view the past because it brings back to us concrete pieces of material culture. Finding cloth on a frontier period site would help us in a couple of ways. If the cloth looked the way we thought it would, then it would corroborate. It would back up. It would underline the things that we were seeing and learning from the archival record. If it didn't look the way we thought, it would - based on what we knew about the Frontier Period - then it would cause us to ask new questions. And, to possibly drive us in new directions with our research."

Video: Roach on camera. Photo: Frontier artifacts (KAS). Lantern slide: Fort Boonesborough (KHS). Textile sample. Montage of archaeological questions: a) Artwork: *The Unnoticed Observers* by David Wright. Artwork: African American woman spinning (LOC). Well at Bryan's Station (KHS).

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: Text of questions: 1) Did American Indians continue to use indigenous textile technologies during the Frontier Period? 2) Did African Americans retain traditional textiles or designs in Kentucky? 3) How did the role of women change as textile production changed through the Frontier Period?

Scene LAW/ PIO-23: (00:27 seconds)

Demonstrator: Jo Ann Oborski

"I think you need to know about textile production and clothing of what your great-grandparents had to deal with. You can go to a store and buy something that has been made by a machine. They didn't have that luxury. You need to know what grandma and grandpa put up with, – or your great-grand parents - and how they worked to make a life for themselves here for future generations."

Video: Oborski on camera. Photos: Woman spinning wool, ca. 1900s (PH Collection, KHS). Mountain Cabin, African American family, ca. 1900s (LPL). Older woman spinning with castle wheel, ca. 1900s (PH Collection, KHS). Woman spinning, ca. 1900s (PH Collection, KHS).

Audio: Music continues.

Graphics: none.

Scene LAW/ PIO-25: (00:50 seconds)

Interview: Archaeologist Wayna Roach

"We have Living Archaeology Weekend in the Red River Gorge in Eastern Kentucky to intentionally reach out to the people who live in that area. And many of them may not recognize the spinning wheel. They may not recognize the linen, but they recognize the techniques, the sewing, the quilting, and they may even have in their possession quilts that were handed down that they may or may not now have some of those really, really old pieces of cloth in them."

"We want to help them understand the history of the Red River Gorge, their connections to it and when they understand their connections to it, they will take meaning from that and they will see it as their own place and their own future."

Video: Roach on camera. Video: Gladie Cabin at LAW event (KET). Woman spinning at LAW event (KET). Woman with box loom at LAW event (KET). Photo: Woman quilting (LPL). Oborski at walking wheel. Pappas at loom, Gladie Cabin. Photo: Woman in blue dress spinning (PH Collection, KHS). Photo: Gladie Cabin, 2020 (DBNF). Woman Quilting (LPL).

Audio: Music resolves.

Graphics: none.

Credits: 01:45 minutes

Scene LAW/ PIO-26:

Announcer: Tom Law

More information and educational materials are available on the Living Archaeology Weekend website.

Living Archaeology Weekend (logo)

www.livingarchaeologyweekend.org

Video: Announcer and text graphics.

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Graphics: text.

Scene LAW/ PIO-27:

Major Funding Announcement

Announcer: no announce

Major Funders

Slate one

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Scene LAW/ PIO-28:

A) Acknowledgments

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Gladie Visitor Center

Red River Gorge, Daniel Boone National Forest
Ann Wilkinson, Archaeologist

Montgomery County History Museum

Mt. Sterling, Kentucky
Jo Oborski, Manager

Jeff Becker Farm

Archives

Daniel Boone National Forest Kentucky Archaeological Survey Kentucky Historical Society

Fort Boonesborough, Colonial Dames Collection, PH 1062, Graphic 19, Box 1-77

Bryan Station, Colonial Dames Collection, PH 676, Graphic 19, Box 1-19

Fort Harrod, Colonial Dames Collection, PH 676, Graphic 19, Box 1-6

Cabin at Ft. Harrod, KY Geological Survey, PH 9186, Graphic 8, Box 5-F9-01

Spinning at a mountain cabin, Ronald Morgan Collection, Morgan 7660, Graphic 5, Box 20-76

Modern Home in the Mountains of KY, Ronald Morgan Collection, Morgan 7663, Graphic 5, Box 20-77

Spinning Hemp, Philadelphia Commercial Museum Collection, PH 5745, Graphic 7, Box 1-F2-10

Spinning Hemp, Philadelphia Commercial Museum Collection, PH 5748, Graphic 7, Box 1-F2-11

Woman sitting at a spinning wheel, Colonial Dames Collection, PH 671, Graphic 19, Box 1-14

Spinning Wheel, Robert Burns Stone Collection, PH 7402, Graphic 20, Box 11-035

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Eli Bedel

Old-time music for Voyageur Media Group, Inc.
Cumberland Gap, Lazy John, Dulcimer (Proud), Bowling Green, Coleman's March

Pond5

Inspirational Acoustic Background by Inspiring Audio
Investigation – Science Research by MV Productions
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Scene LAW/ PIO-29:

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Pioneer Textiles

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