


AETN - A JOURNEY OF THE SIX REGIONS OF ARKANSAS



9th - 12th
Grades

Arkansas Geographical Regions

- ▣ Ozark Plateau
- ▣ Arkansas River Valley
- ▣ Ouachita Mountains
- ▣ Mississippi Alluvial Plain
- ▣ West Gulf Coastal Plain
- ▣ Crowley's Ridge



Six Natural Regions of Arkansas

Although Arkansas is most easily divided into two distinct geographical regions, the northwestern uplands and the southeastern lowlands, this description does not accurately portray the state's geographical complexity. There are actually six geographic sub-regions, three in both the uplands and the lowlands. The northwestern uplands are made up of three distinctive sub-regions: The Ozark Mountains, the Arkansas River Valley, and the Ouachita Mountains. The southeastern lowlands are comprised of the Gulf Coastal Plain (The Timberlands), the Mississippi Alluvial Plain (the Delta), and Crowley's Ridge.



The **Ozark region** of Arkansas is located in the extreme northern and western portions of the state. This area is marked by flat-topped mountains, or plateaus, which have been eroded over millions of years.



The **Arkansas River Valley** is the area carved by the river long ago. This 40-mile wide trough divides the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains. Most of Arkansas's larger cities can be found in the river valley-Fort Smith, Little Rock, and several others.

Six Natural Regions of Arkansas



The **Ouachita Mountains** lie south of the river valley. These mountains run east to west and are largely covered in pine trees. The soil here is even worse than that of the Ozarks. There are many unusual features here including Hot Springs and the diamond crater at Murfreesboro.



The southern part of Arkansas is part of the **Gulf Coastal Plain**. This area was once covered by the Gulf of Mexico and emerged from the sea 50 million to 100 million years ago. Today there is much agriculture and timber in this area, as well as oil and natural gas deposits.



The **Delta**, or **Mississippi Alluvial Plain**, covers the eastern portion of Arkansas. Here the Mississippi and numerous other rivers have deposited rich soils over millions of years. This area has swamps, prairies, and rich farmland where the soil is very deep. Today this region is the primary agricultural part of Arkansas.



Crowley's Ridge divides the eastern part of Arkansas. The ridge is composed of loess (windblown soil) and runs for 150 miles north from Helena. It varies in height from 250 to 500 feet above sea level. Crowley's ridge was originally an island between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. When these rivers shifted their courses millions of years ago, Crowley's ridge was left behind as a long, low hilly formation. Most of the major cities of the Arkansas Delta can be found on or near Crowley's Ridge.

Ozark Mountains



The Ozark surface features were created as water eroded the plateau. This process took millions of years and shaped the Ozarks into its present rugged shape.

Caves, such as Blanchard Springs Caverns, were formed by streams flowing through cracks in the limestone. These streams carved mountains out of the plateau. They made bluffs, waterfalls, and natural dams.



Rivers have carved deep valleys into the high, flat plateaus here. These mountains are more than two thousand feet higher than the lowlands of the southeastern half of the state.

Arkansas River Valley

- ▣ A series of valleys between the Ozark and Ouachita mountains through which the Arkansas River flows.



Section of the Arkansas River Valley seen from atop St. Mary's Mountain, overlooking Altus (Franklin County). The Ouachita Mountains can be seen far to the south; 2007.

Ouachita Mountains

The Ouachitas are located in the western part of the state. Long, narrow ridges that run from east to west characterize this region.

Within its boundaries lie the communities of Hot Springs, and part of Little Rock and Mena.

Sandy soil allows pine trees to grow on the south slopes of the Ouachita and hardwoods grow on the north faces.

Why?

Because the sun shines on the southern slope and creates a warm, dry place for pines to grow.



View of Eagle Mountain in Polk County, part of the Ouachita National Forest.

Mississippi Alluvial Plain

When the Gulf of Mexico receded from the Delta millions of years ago, its geological deposits were removed by rivers and replaced by deep layers of sand, silt and clay.

Flat bottomlands characterize the area and today, it is a major agricultural region. Powerful rivers, the Arkansas, White and Mississippi, flow through the area and often cause floods.



West Gulf Coastal Plain

The lowland region has some hills, but most of the area is flat. Rivers and lakes are found in the region. The Arkansas oil industry is headquartered here. Sandy, rolling hills harbor pine trees and hardwood bottoms are found along rivers. Wildlife such as deer, beaver and wading birds are abundant.

Lion Oil Company rig near El Dorado (Union County); circa 1940.



<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=259>



Crowley's Ridge

- Crowley's Ridge is in the eastern lowlands of Arkansas.
- Hills on the Mississippi Alluvial Plain that are from one to twelve miles wide and about two hundred miles in length, running from Missouri to Helena, Arkansas.



Crowley's Ridge as seen rising from the flatlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain, one of Arkansas's six natural divisions. Looking east from Highway 412, approximately fifteen miles east of Paragould (Greene County); 2008.

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=7588>

Major River Systems of Arkansas



Arkansas River

- ◉ Across the state, flowing from the northwest to southeast is the mighty and beautiful Arkansas River.
- ◉ It begins high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains and travels across a third of the continent to join the Mississippi river in the southeast corner of Arkansas.

Looking south at the Murray Lock & Dam No. 7 on the Arkansas River, near Little Rock (Pulaski County). The Big Dam Bridge spans the structure and allows pedestrian and bicycle traffic to cross the river; 2008.

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=7665>



Mississippi River

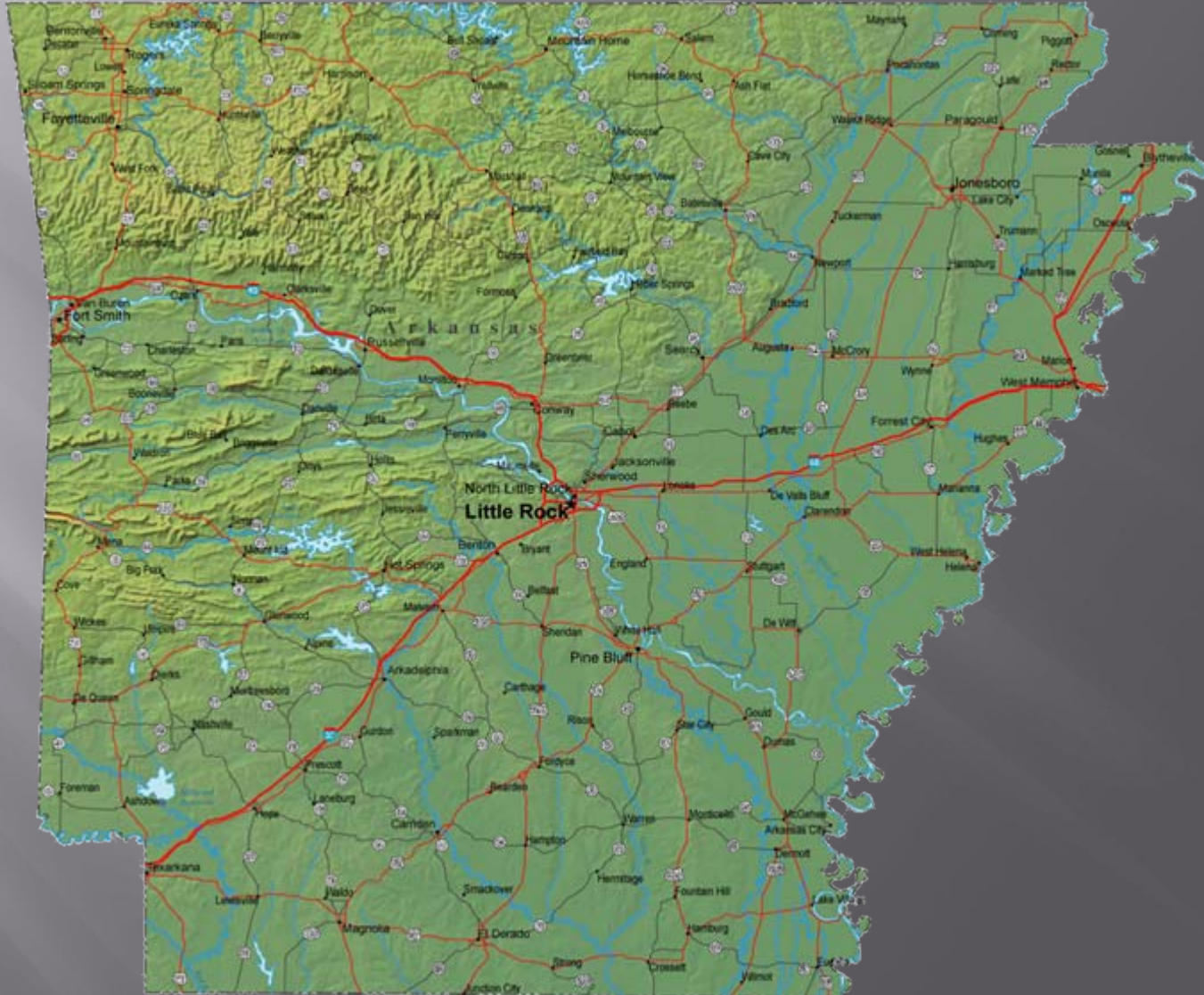
- ▣ The Mississippi River is the second largest river in the United States, with a length of 2,340 from its source in Minnesota.



McCallie Access to the Mississippi River, four miles northeast of Arkansas City (Desha County), looking north. The land mass to the right is an island that is part of the State of Mississippi; 2007.

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=7387>

Research to determine how Arkansas's cities and towns got their names



What are the effects of these natural resources on Arkansas's economy?

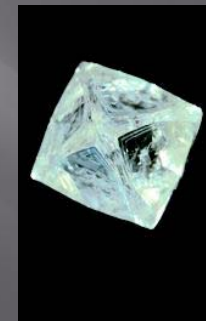


Novaculite
(a form of
chert)

Lignite (a brownish-
black coal)



Oil



Diamonds



Forestry



Bauxite
(used to
make
aluminum)

ADE 9th - 12th Grades Social Studies Frameworks Addressed in this PowerPoint

- Strand: Geography
 - Standard 1: Physical and Spatial
 - Content Standard 1: Students shall analyze the geographical regions of Arkansas.

- G.1.AH.9-12.1
 - Investigate the six geographical land regions of Arkansas:
 - Ozark Mountains (plateau)
 - Ouachita Mountains
 - Arkansas River Valley
 - Mississippi Alluvial Plain
 - Crowley's Ridge
 - West Gulf Coastal Plain

ADE 9th - 12th Grades Social Studies Frameworks Addressed in this PowerPoint

- G.1.AH.9-12.2
 - ▣ Examine the practical uses of the major rivers in Arkansas (e.g., trade, transportation, recreation)

- G.1.AH.9-12.3
 - Analyze factors contributing to the settlement of Arkansas (e.g., climate, water, accessibility)

- G.1.AH.9-12.4
 - Research the origins of key place names in Arkansas (e.g. towns, counties, and landforms)

- G.1.AH.9-12.5
 - Examine the economic effect of Arkansas' natural resources:
 - diamonds
 - bauxite
 - forestry products
 - Oil
 - Lignite
 - novaculite