

Event Theme: "Canal Life: The Juniata Division"

This theme focuses on the daily life of those who built, operated, and lived along the canal during its active period from 1832 to 1888. The activities are designed to be hands-on for the public and to provide a rewarding learning experience for the Scouts.

Friday, September 5, 2025: Arrival and Setup

- **Late Afternoon (5:00 PM - 7:00 PM): Unit Arrivals and Campsite Setup.**
 - Scouting units arrive at the Rogers-Newman Park in Mount Union to set up their campsites.
 - Units are encouraged to use period-appropriate camping gear or to decorate their sites to reflect the 1830s-1880s era, if possible.
- **Evening (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM): Welcome and Opening Ceremonies.**
 - Gather at a central location for a brief welcome from the camporee chairman.
 - Start a campfire program. This could include a storyteller sharing tales of the canal's history and the people who worked on it, such as lock tenders, boat captains, and mule drivers.
- **Night (9:00 PM onwards): Cracker Barrel and Patrol Planning.**
 - Leaders and older Scouts gather for a "cracker barrel" (informal meeting) to review the next day's schedule and coordinate logistics for the exhibition.
 - Patrols can prepare their demonstrations for the public exposition.

Saturday, September 6, 2025: Public Scouting Exposition and Canal Activities

- **Morning (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM): Public Exhibition at the Mount Union Area Historical Society grounds.**
 - Each unit sets up its demonstration booth on the grounds of the Mount Union Area Historical Society. The goal is for the public to move from station to station and experience different aspects of canal life.
 - Suggested Unit Demonstrations:
 - **Cub Scout Pack:** Host games from the era, such as hoop rolling, marbles, or graces. They could also have a simple craft station for making paper boats to "race."
 - **Scouts BSA Troop:** Demonstrate skills from the era. Ideas include rope making (for canal ropes), basic blacksmithing (with a focus on historical tools and safety), or wood carving. They could also teach knots related to tying up boats or cargo.
 - **Venture Crew:** Research and demonstrate more complex aspects of the canal. This could include a model of a canal lock to explain how they worked or a display about the different types of cargo transported on the canal, such as coal and agricultural products. They could also perform period-appropriate entertainment like folk songs or a short play about life on a canal boat.
- **Lunch (12:00 PM - 1:00 PM): Public and Scout Lunch Break.**

- **Afternoon (1:00 PM - 4:00 PM): The Newton-Hamilton Canal Lockhouse.**
 - Transportation is key for this portion of the plan. You could organize carpools, or if the budget allows, hire a local bus service to transport Scouts and leaders to the Newton-Hamilton Historical Society's lockhouse. **The distance is short enough that Patrols can be encouraged to hike the 5.8 miles out and back.**
 - At the lockhouse, Scouts can explore the preserved lock and learn about its function directly from historical society members. The lockhouse is a preserved feature of the canal, as many of the original structures are no longer fully intact³.
 - This is an opportunity for Scouts to earn a "Canal History" patch by completing a set of tasks, such as drawing a sketch of the lockhouse, identifying key features of the lock, and writing a short report on the experience.
- **Late Afternoon (4:00 PM - 6:00 PM): The Sharrar House Tavern.**
 - Return to the Mount Union Historical Society grounds.
 - The Sharrar House, a former canal-era tavern, provides a perfect location for a historical tour. The Scouts can learn about its role as a social hub for canal workers and travelers. You could even use this as a setting for a short skit or reenactments.
- **Evening (6:00 PM - 7:00 PM): Dinner.**
 - Units prepare and eat dinner at their campsites.
- **Night (7:00 PM onwards): Court of Honor and Awards.**
 - Hold a Court of Honor to recognize units and individuals for their efforts.
 - Award a special camporee patch or other recognition for participation in the historical demonstrations and activities.

Sunday, September 7, 2025: Reflection and Departure

- **Morning (7:00 AM - 9:00 AM): Clean Up and Pack Up.**
 - Units clean their campsites and the park, practicing the principles of Leave No Trace.
- **Late Morning (9:00 AM): Scout Vespers Service**
- **10:30 AM Final Departure.**
 - Units depart the Rogers-Newman Park.

General Guidelines for All Units

- **Focus on Hands-On Experience:** The best demonstrations are interactive. Let the public try a skill, play a game, or participate in a song.
- **Keep it Simple:** The demonstration should be easy to explain and quick for the public to engage with. You'll have a constant flow of visitors, so an activity that takes just a few minutes is ideal.

- **Historical Accuracy:** While fun is the priority, encourage Scouts to do a little research on their chosen topic. They should be able to explain to a visitor why this skill, craft, or game was relevant to the canal era.
- **Prepare a Display:** A simple sign with a catchy title, a few facts, and the name of the unit is a great way to attract visitors.
- **Uniforms:** Ensure all Scouts are in the appropriate field uniform (Class A) for the public exhibition.

For Cub Scout Packs: Games and Simple Crafts

Cub Scout demonstrations should be energetic and focused on fun. They are the perfect units to show what life was like for a child along the canal.

Suggested Demonstration Activities:

1. **"Canal-Side Games":** Choose a couple of simple games that children in the 1800s would have played. This is a great way to have your Scouts interact with younger children from the public.
 - **Rolling Hoops:** Provide a few wooden hoops and sticks. The goal is to see who can roll their hoop the farthest without it falling over.
 - **Game of Graces:** This game involves tossing a decorated hoop between two players using two sticks. It was popular with girls and boys and teaches coordination.
 - **Marbles or Jackstraws (Pick-Up Sticks):** Set up a playing area with simple rules for these classic games.
2. **"Rag Dolls & Cornhusk Creations":** Many toys were handmade during this period.
 - Teach visitors how to make a small rag doll using a stick, a scrap of cloth, and some twine.
 - Provide dried cornhusks and twine to let children create simple dolls or animals. This ties into the agricultural side of the Juniata Valley.

Unit Preparation Checklist:

- Research the rules for your chosen game.
- Gather all necessary materials (hoops, sticks, marbles, fabric, cornhusks, etc.).
- Practice teaching the game or craft to each other.
- Prepare a simple sign that says, "Canal Era Games" or "Make Your Own Toys" with a few fun facts.

For Scouts BSA Troops: Skills and Trades

Scouts BSA units can focus on the practical skills that would have been essential for running a canal boat or maintaining the canal itself.

Suggested Demonstration Activities:

1. **"Rope Work and Knots":** Ropes were essential for canal life—from tying up the boat to harnessing the mules.
 - Demonstrate and teach knots relevant to the era: The bowline, clove hitch, and square knot would be good examples.
 - Show how to make a simple rope or cord from a natural fiber like jute or sisal. You can find simple plans for a rope-making jig online.
2. **"Tinsmithing & Lanterns":** Tinsmiths were common craftsmen. While you won't do actual smithing, you can teach the public about it.
 - Demonstrate how to make a small punched-tin lantern using a can, a hammer, and a nail. This is a safe and simple craft that produces a great takeaway item.
 - Explain the importance of lanterns for night travel on the canal and for lock tenders working after dark.
3. **"Period Cooking Demonstration":** Show the public how food was prepared on a canal boat or in a tavern.
 - Use a Dutch oven to cook a simple stew or bread. You can also prepare a simple trail food, like jerky, and explain how it was used by boat crews.
 - The Scouts can research the types of food available in the 1800s in central Pennsylvania.

Unit Preparation Checklist:

- Assign Scouts to research the history of their chosen skill and its relevance to the canal.
- Gather all materials and practice the demonstration to ensure a smooth public presentation.
- Create a display board with diagrams of knots or pictures of historical tools.
- Ensure all safety measures are in place for any activity involving tools or heat.

For Venture Crews: Entertainment and Historical Interpretation

Venture Crews, with their focus on high adventure and personal development, are well-suited to provide more complex demonstrations that involve research and performance.

Suggested Demonstration Activities:

1. **"Folk Music of the Canal":** Music was a central part of life.
 - Learn and perform era-appropriate folk songs. You could include ballads about canal boats, work songs, or popular tunes of the day.
 - Perform with acoustic instruments like a guitar, fiddle, or harmonica.
2. **"The Lock Tender's Story":** A powerful and educational presentation.
 - Research the life of a lock tender on the Juniata Division.
 - Create a short, interactive skit where a crew member explains the process of moving a boat through a lock. You could use a simple model or props to illustrate the process.

3. **"Canal Commerce":** Focus on the economics and goods transported on the canal.
 - Create a map or diagram showing the route of the Juniata Division and the types of cargo (coal, lumber, flour) that were transported.
 - Set up a mock-up of a store or "company store" display with examples of goods that would have been traded.

Unit Preparation Checklist:

- Conduct in-depth research on the history of your topic using the provided links and other resources.
- Rehearse skits and musical performances multiple times.
- Create informative posters or handouts to share with the public.
- Be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussions about the topic.

Online Resources for Your Research

Here are some helpful links for finding inspiration and historical details for your demonstrations:

Games and Activities

- **Fort Scott National Historic Site (NPS):** A great resource for 19th-century children's games. <https://www.nps.gov/fosc/learn/education/childrengame.htm>
- **USHist.com:** A list of popular 19th-century toys and games. https://www.ushist.com/19th-century_toys-and-games.shtml
- **Mackinac State Historic Parks:** A PDF with instructions for a variety of 18th & 19th-century games. <https://www.mackinacparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Games.pdf>

Crafts and Skills

- **Colonial Williamsburg:** While a bit earlier than your time period, this site has some good ideas for basic crafts like tinsmithing and rope making. <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/discover/resource-hub/colonial-crafts/>
- **Victorian Voices:** A collection of articles on crafts and toys, including how to make things like rag dolls. <https://www.victorianvoices.net/topics/children/toys.shtml>

Music and Entertainment

- **Library of Congress:** Articles and essays on popular music of the 19th century. This can help identify what songs were popular and why. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/popular-songs-of-the-day/>
- **Kent State University Libraries:** This collection of "Street Ballads of Victorian England" can provide some inspiration for the types of songs that would have been popular during

the era. <https://www.library.kent.edu/special-collections-and-archives/street-ballads-victorian-england-collection>