



Old Fort William

Teacher's Guide

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PRE-CONTACT TRADE AND CONTACT

Before the coming of Europeans, trading networks among the original inhabitants of the continent led to exchanges of material goods, cultures and languages.

The evidence pointing to these trading networks is considerable. Flint from a few quarries is found throughout the continent. Copper from the Coppermine River and Lake Superior regions is found throughout the Arctic and Hudson's Bay region; shell beads or *wampum* from the East Coast have been found as far west as the prairies, along with Abalone shells that have been traded inland from the West Coast. At the Heron Bay site on the North Shore of Lake Superior, goods of diverse origin indicate widespread trade. Obsidian from Wyoming, shells from Manitoba and pottery from the southeastern Great Lakes region have all been found at this site. Even after contact between Europeans and Natives on the East Coast led to trade, the Native trading networks remained intact with interior tribes purchasing European goods from coastal tribes. For example, the Cree of the Hudson's Bay region were able to trade profitably with tribes in the interior of North America by using European goods to purchase furs which they would then trade with the Hudson's Bay company for more goods.

Despite persistent speculation that the Irish priest St. Brendan might have reached North America before any other European, the earliest European/Native contact supported by written, oral and archaeological evidence occurred in about 1,000 A.D. between the Norse, or Vikings, and the Beothuks of Newfoundland. The Viking Sagas, an epic poem detailing the voyages of the Norsemen, and archeological evidence tell of a short-lived settlement on "Vinland" as the Vikings called it. This first contact was anything but friendly and the persistent and bloody fighting led the Norsemen to abandon their settlement.

The abundant fishery of Newfoundland's Grand Banks led to the initial trading contact between Natives and Europeans. During the sixteenth century, fishermen from Portugal, Spain, England and France would spend summers harvesting cod off the coast of North America during. Sometimes small, seasonal villages would be established in order to dry and salt the catch for shipment back to Europe. From these villages, small-scale trade was conducted, with the European men purchasing furs from the Natives in exchange for iron goods, beads, mirrors and other European goods desired by the Natives.

The quality and abundance of furs obtained in North America did not escape notice in Europe. The felt top hat made from beaver fur was very popular in Europe and the resultant trapping pressure had greatly reduced the numbers of European beaver. This led to interest in a large-scale North American fur trade.

Both parties in the early fur trade approached the exchange as independents who were amused with the other's craving of the goods they had to offer. A Montagnais man found the English desire for beaver pelts perplexing and amusing:

The Beaver does everything perfectly well, it makes kettles, hatchets, swords, knives, bread; and in short, it makes everything...The English have no sense; they give us twenty knives like this for one Beaver skin.

PRE - CONTACT TRADE AND CONTACT

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate specific knowledge of the early fur trade and consideration of various perspectives by writing, or speaking about the reaction of both cultures to contact and trade. Students will demonstrate written or oral communication skills in their completion of the assignment.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes. More time may be required if many students opt for the oral presentation.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The students' written assignments or oral presentations will provide the basis for evaluation. The marks should be broken down as follows:

WRITTEN: 10 marks historic content
5 marks quality of expression/insight
5 marks mechanics (spelling , grammar)

ORAL: 10 marks historic content
5 marks quality of expression/insight
5 marks mechanics (volume, eye contact, clarity)

INTRODUCTION:

The following questions may be posed to the students in order to introduce the lesson:
Who were the first inhabitants of Canada?
What was the first form of business in Canada?

DISCUSSION:

After having the students view the material on Pre-Contact trade, use the following questions to promote class discussion:

What goods were the various tribes trading with one another?
How extensive were the Native trading networks?
Where did the initial trading contact between Natives and Europeans take place in North America?
Why did contact occur at this location?
What goods were exchanged in early trade between Europeans and Natives?
Why is the initial trade between Europeans and Natives important to Canadian history?

EXERCISE: Creative Writing/Speaking

Have the students describe early trade between Natives and Europeans from the perspective of a member of both cultures. This exercise may take the form of a brief, written response or an oral presentation from both perspectives. Students must be encouraged to consider the following factors:

How does this affect me immediately?

How might this affect me in the future?

Why am I willing to trade for these items?

What value do I give to the items I am trading away?

THE FRENCH FUR TRADE

The competition for control of North America's fur-bearing regions is synonymous with much of the early history of Canada.

During the seventeenth century, the French pushed westward from their colony on the St. Lawrence River, seeking new territories which were rich in furs. The French traders, known as the *coureurs des bois*, or "runners of the woods", loaded canoes with trade goods and went in search of the Native trappers of the interior.

At the height of the French fur trade, as many as four hundred men were trading as *coureurs des bois*. Eventually their domain extended from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and west to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Obstacles to the continental ambitions of the French came first from Dutch, then from British traders stationed at Albany on the Hudson River in present-day New York State. After the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1670, competition also came from London-based merchants trading on the shores of Hudson Bay.

The major advantage of the trade via Hudson's Bay was that transportation costs were very low. Ships could sail directly between the Bay and England, so that the Hudson's Bay Company did not need to ship goods inland using canoes or small boats. The HBC stayed on the cold shores of Hudson Bay, and the natives (mostly Cree) came from as far away as the North Saskatchewan River to trade for English goods.

The aggressive trading style of the French allowed them to succeed in spite of their English competition. Even though their costs were higher than those incurred by the Hudson's Bay Company, making their trade goods more expensive, the fact that they were present in the interior, saving the Natives the journey to Hudson's Bay, made for a profitable trade. It was much easier for the Natives to trade with the French, who came right to their homes, rather than travelling all the way to Hudson Bay to trade with the HBC. This convenience compensated for the higher prices that the French traders charged.

As the French moved west of Lake Superior, the Kaministikwia River assumed strategic importance as the juncture between the Great Lakes and the North West. Midway across the continent, the Kaministikwia links Thunder Bay on the western shores of Lake Superior to the height of land dividing the Atlantic and Hudson Bay watersheds. After a short portage, the Rainy River system leads to Lake Winnipeg, from which the Saskatchewan River spreads across the plains toward the Athabasca country and the Rocky Mountains. The entrance to the Kaministikwia River was thus a key access point to the entire northwest quarter of the North American continent.

Archaeological evidence shows that North American Natives had used the Kaministikwia for some two thousand years before Europeans first arrived in the area. Although the famous French explorer-traders Radisson and Groseilliers were probably the first to reach the western shores of Lake Superior, the first permanent structure in the region was built at the mouth of the Kaministikwia River more than three centuries ago in 1679 by Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Du Lhut

(Duluth). Fort Camanistigoyan served as a base for the French as they moved inland in search of furs and the Northwest Passage to the Western Sea. The most famous of these adventurers were Pierre La Verendrye and his sons who took the French fur trade to its western limits, the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

In the 1730's, the French abandoned the Kaministikwia after discovering the shorter and somewhat less difficult Pigeon River route from Lake Superior to Rainy River and the West. Although the Fort Caministigoyan area continued to be "farmed" by the French for furs, the new depot for the northwest trade became Grand Portage in what is now northern Minnesota.

End of the French Fur Trade

The French fur trade met its official end with the conquest of New France by Britain in 1760. While the French no longer controlled the trade, the system they had developed would remain in use for years to come. British merchants operating out of Montreal would use proven French techniques and skilled French traders and labourers in order to experience the same success enjoyed by the *coureurs des bois*. In fact, the majority of British traders used the French language and identified themselves as "the French" in their dealings with the Natives in order to capitalize on the good relations developed by the *coureurs des bois*, and distinguish themselves from "the English" or Hudson's Bay Company.

THE FRENCH FUR TRADE

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate an understanding of the style fur trade developed by the French in North America. Students will show specific knowledge of the *coureurs des bois* as well as an appreciation of the contribution made by the French Canadians to future trading ventures and exploration in Canada.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The students' written assignments will be evaluated as follows:

10 marks historic content

10 marks comprehension of issues, maturity of expression and creativity

5 marks mechanics (spelling, grammar, format)

INTRODUCTION:

The following questions should be presented to the class to introduce the topics to be covered:

What was the first European nation to settle in the interior of Canada?

What was the major business in Canada during the French period?

*Note the next two questions may seem tangential, but are applicable to our study of the French style of fur trade.

Why are corner stores able to stay in business when huge supermarkets and department stores have lower costs and better prices?

To what extent does convenience determine where you purchase food, clothing and luxuries?

DISCUSSION:

After the students have reviewed the material on the French Fur Trade, use the following questions to promote class discussion:

Who were the coureurs des bois?

What enabled the coureurs des bois to be successful as fur traders?

How far into the interior did the French fur traders travel?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the French style of fur trade?

Who were the major competitors of the French fur traders?

What was their approach to trade?

EXERCISE:

Based on the information provided and the class discussion, the students will answer the following question in writing:

In your opinion, what would be the most effective way to approach the North American fur trade in the seventeenth century?

(You are not limited to choosing one of the methods illustrated in our readings, you may use this information to develop your own ideas as to what should have been done. Use historic examples to support your proposed approach).

THE RISE OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

Following the British Conquest of New France in 1760, merchants and traders from Great Britain and her American colonies came to Canada and assumed control of the French fur trade. These newcomers not only had capital, but access to a high volume of manufactured goods from Britain. Soon, Alexander Henry was at the great distribution centre of the French at Michilimakinac (Mackinaw). Before long, British traders were penetrating west of Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg, and beyond the limits of the earlier French trade. In the 1770's, they were on the Saskatchewan River, reaping fortunes from their dealings with the Natives—Natives who traditionally carried their furs to Hudson Bay. And in 1778 fur trader Peter Pond led the Montreal-based merchants into the fur-rich Athabasca region. By this time the Hudson's Bay Company was well aware that the "pedlars" from Montreal formed a serious threat to their monopoly, and responded by moving inland to meet their challenge.

The Quebec Act of 1774 expanded Quebec's borders to include the territory between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, causing a second wave of merchants to descend on Montreal in order to gain access to these trading grounds. Among them was Simon McTavish, a young Scottish emigré who abandoned his interests in the Colonies in favour of the opportunities offered by the Montreal-based fur trade. The American War of Independence intervened (1776-1783), disrupting trade throughout the country and causing yet another influx of merchants and fortune-seekers from the Colonies. The treaties which ended the American Revolution further constricted the Montreal merchants by declaring the southwest trade routes through the Mississippi off-limits. The Montreal traders were forced to focus thereafter on the trade northwest of the Great Lakes.

The northwest trade would prove extremely profitable for Simon McTavish and the other fur merchants in Montreal, but the road would not be easy. On the one hand, they had succeeded in adopting aspects of the French trade that increased their profits. Like the French before them, they took the trade to the Natives in their own hunting grounds. They also began cementing alliances with the Natives through presents and marriages. Having a "country" wife became accepted practice for the fur traders.

The Montrealers also adopted the French transportation system to take the trade inland. This was based on the birch bark canoe of the Native and the motive power of the French Canadian voyageur. Their route followed the traditional fur trade "highway" from Montreal—up the Ottawa (Grande) and Mattawa (Petite) Rivers, descending the French River to the North Channel of Georgian Bay. Once on the Great Lakes, the fur traders followed the North Channel, portaged around the rapids at Sault Ste Marie to reach Lake Superior, then followed the north shore to Grand Portage – the transshipment point and depot for the northwest.

The growth of the Montreal-based fur trade at this time was limited, however, by competition, not only with the Hudson's Bay Company, but also between independent Canadian and British merchants in Montreal. Loose arrangements among these merchants had already been formed, but it took the force and vision of Simon McTavish to unite competing interests in Montreal with the object of opposing the Hudson's Bay Company in the Interior. This partnership took the name of the North West Company in 1783, and McTavish became its principal director until 1804.

By the early nineteenth century, the fur trade of Montreal faced the same kind of two-way competition it had known under the French. To the north were the English now moving inland from their bases on Hudson Bay. To the south were the Americans moving west along the Missouri River. The continuing struggle against this opposition is the setting which shaped the destiny of the North West Company and its inland headquarters at Fort William.

Fort William

Until the end of the 1700's, the Nor'Westers continued to use the old French route to the west through Grand Portage and the Pigeon River. Grand Portage was a major depot for transshipping goods and furs and became the rendezvous place for Montreal merchants and wintering trading partners.

The peace treaty of 1783, which ended the American War of Independence, made the Pigeon River the border between the United States and British North America. Although Grand Portage was now on U.S. soil, the North West Company continued to use it as their inland headquarters for almost twenty years. Their luck ran out in 1800, when the Americans threatened to charge customs duties on all British goods moving across the Portage. This finally forced the traders to transfer their operations back to British soil.

By 1801, the North West Company started building a fort on the north bank of the Kaministikwia River. In 1803 the company held its first summer meeting at "Fort Kaministiquia" as it was called. In 1807, it was renamed Fort William in honour of William McGillivray, chief superintendent of the Company. William was Simon McTavish's nephew, one of several kinsmen that he and other Scottish partners in the company inducted into the Canadian fur trade. When Simon died in 1804, William took his place as chief director of the North West Company, and remained so until its merger with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

As the centre of the North West Company's vast trading network, Fort William hosted the annual Rendezvous, a gathering of about two thousand people from across the continent. This gathering was necessary because of the enormous distances between Montreal and the Company's western posts, which made it impossible for canoes to make the round trip in one frost-free season. Anyone trying to paddle from Montreal, to the far west, and back to Montreal would die in the snows of early winter on the return trip. To avoid this, the Company used two sets of canoes. Each spring, canoes from Montreal carrying trade goods set off for Fort William where they met canoes carrying fur from the North and West.

Fort William's many roles in the operations of the North West Company included the following:

- the place for the annual meeting of Montreal agents & wintering partners;
- the Company's inland business office;
- a warehousing depot for trade goods, provisions and furs;
- the transshipment point between Lake Superior and the waterways of the interior;
- a service centre for manufacturing and repairing certain trade items and containers for shipping, storage and cooking;

- a centre for building and repairing the means of transportation used in the fur trade including schooners, bateaux, and canoes;
- an agricultural base to supplement the provisions of company personnel;
- the quarters for lodging, provisioning and equipping North West Company personnel;
- the hub for their social activities and festivities;
- the centre for the trade of the Fort William Department which included the region around Lake Superior and west as far as Lac La Pluie (Rainy Lake)

THE RISE OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate a basic knowledge of the early British trade out of Montreal and the roots of the North West Company by successfully completing the attached question sheet. Students will show communication and group work skills as well as analysis and evaluation skills in the forming of groups and defending of choices included in the Introduction and Discussion session.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes

PREPARATION:

Ensuring that sufficient “attribute cards” (see INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION) are made up, and familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The short-answer question sheet that accompanies this lesson is worth 20 marks.

INTRODUCTION / DISCUSSION:

Each student will be given a card with one of the following attributes printed on it: MONEY, EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGES, SKILLED LABOUR, KNOWLEDGE OF CANOE ROUTES, ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH NATIVES. The students will then be directed to organize themselves into groups that they feel provide the strongest collection of attributes for a fur trade venture. Once they have grouped themselves, each group will explain why they feel that their chosen attributes are important. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate the importance of the French fur trade to British merchants operating out of Montreal. The teacher must ensure that the importance of each attribute is emphasised.

EXERCISE:

Having viewed the material on post-conquest trade, the students will answer the following questions in writing:

1. *Why did British fur traders base their activities on the French-Canadian trade?* (5 marks)
2. *Why did the independent merchants in Montreal band together to form the North West Company?* (2 marks)
3. *Who is recognised as the founder of the North West Company?* (1 mark)
4. *What was the company's first inland headquarters?* (1 mark)
5. *What was the company's second inland headquarters?* (1 mark)
6. *Who replaced Simon McTavish as the company's chief director in 1804?* (1 mark)
7. *Why was the North West Company successful?* (4 marks)
8. *Why was Fort William important? Give five reasons.* (5 marks)

EXPLORATION OF THE INTERIOR

The French fur traders and explorers, such as Radisson, Grosseilliers and Pierre La Verendrye opened much of North America to the Europeans. Using the trading relationships they had established with the Natives, the French were able to employ Native guides to take them as far west as the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

As the Montreal-based British traders built on the French trading networks after the conquest of New France in 1760, they also used French exploration as a basis for expanding their territory. Some of the greatest explorers of the age were North West Company partners.

By 1778, Peter Pond had opened up the Athabasca country to the fur trade. But the cost of transporting trade goods and furs by canoe to and from Montreal became higher and higher as the distances increased.

The easiest way to ship furs from the Athabasca region to Europe would have been through Hudson Bay. But, with the Bay barred to the North West Company by the Hudson's Bay Company's chartered rights, the Nor'Westers began to search for a route to the Pacific Ocean. Such a route, they believed, would not only be shorter and cheaper than the voyage to Montreal, but would become the long sought North West Passage to the western sea—across which lay the fabled China market for the furs of North America. The China market was desirable because the spices and silks which could be bought there were in great demand in Europe and could, therefore have been sold quite profitably by the Company.

In spite of the fact that much exploration had already been done by the French, and to a lesser extent by the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company explorers were not venturing into hospitable territory. Constant hunger, the dangers posed by the elements, the harsh terrain and violent rivers combined to make exploration a risky proposition.

MacKenzie, Fraser, & Thompson

In 1789, the first mission to find a route to the Pacific failed when Alexander Mackenzie's voyage of discovery down the river which now bears his name led him instead to the Arctic Ocean. Mackenzie was accompanied on this voyage by a Chipewyan man known as "English Chief" who acted as guide and interpreter. Mackenzie made a second attempt four years later, reaching the Pacific in 1793. Unfortunately, some of his route was by land, which meant that it was not practical for shipping large amounts of goods in the only way possible at the time - by canoe. Despite this failure, Mackenzie's achievement as the first European man known to cross the continent north of Mexico was remarkable. In 1801 he published a narrative of his explorations entitled, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans*, and was shortly thereafter knighted by King George for his accomplishments. In 1808, the search continued. Simon Fraser descended the violent and terrifying river named for him. Although Fraser succeeded in extending the fur trade to the western slopes of the Rockies, he too had failed to find a navigable canoe route to the sea.

It remained for NWC astronomer and cartographer David Thompson to find a route through the mountains. When he explored the Columbia River from its source to the Pacific coast in 1811, Thompson had found the only practical North West Passage.

Like earlier explorers before him, Thompson relied upon the Native people he encountered for assistance. The Native people provided their knowledge of the landscape to give direction to European explorers in unfamiliar country. Diplomatic alliances with individual Natives and tribes proved very important in the way of ensuring a smoother passage from one territory to another. And Native expertise was shared with the explorers to improve their chances of survival; from snowshoes and moccasins to canoes and portable foods, European explorers were much indebted to the Native people. In his journal, David Thompson recognised the assistance he had received, writing “...thank heaven for the favour we find among these numerous people.” For more than half a century, brigades of the western fur trade would follow the course Thompson had plotted from the eastern slopes of the Rockies across the Athabasca Pass and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean.

EXPLORATION OF THE INTERIOR

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate factual knowledge and analytical skill. Through class discussion and group work the students will demonstrate an awareness of the early Canadian explorers and their contributions to the fur trade. Students will also consider the contributions of those not always given a high profile in the study of exploration in Canada.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes. Presentation time as required.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The students will be evaluated on their group presentations as follows:

Content 10 marks

Quality of Expression 5 marks

INTRODUCTION:

Have the students view the material on Exploration with the following questions as a guide:

What problems did early explorers encounter?

How, if at all, were these problems overcome?

Who was the first European to reach the Pacific Ocean overland?

DISCUSSION:

The following questions will be presented for class discussion:

What was the primary goal of most early explorers?

Why was this objective so desirable?

Could these explorers have experienced the same level of success without the assistance of guides and local Natives?

Why are these men recognised as important?

The ensuing discussion should highlight the contributions of Natives and French Canadians to the exploration of Canada. Recognition must also be given to the men who led these expeditions. It is not the goal of this lesson to detract from the accomplishments and leadership of men such as Thompson and Mackenzie, but to illustrate that they did not act without precedent and assistance.

EXERCISE:

In groups of 2-4, the students will prepare a brief presentation defending their choice of the most influential of the highlighted explorers. Students should be encouraged to consider lasting impact, ambition of venture, hardships encountered, support received and distance covered in making their selection.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

The Hudson's Bay Company is the longest-lived business enterprise in Canadian history. It was formed in 1670, and takes its name from the bay discovered by English explorer Henry Hudson about six decades earlier. Although the company began life in London, the process leading to its formation began in New France. Two fur traders based in Montréal had become convinced that the cheapest way to export furs to Europe was through Hudson Bay. Médard Chouart (Sieur des Groseilliers) and Pierre Esprit Radisson tried desperately to convince the French government that they should abandon the long canoe routes from Montreal to the fur-bearing regions of the west, and trade directly with the Cree Indians by transporting European goods into Hudson Bay using ocean-going ships. Their arguments fell on deaf ears, and the French government refused to give them permission to go ahead with their scheme.

Determined to succeed, Radisson and Groseillers took the drastic step of traveling to London to interest English investors in the project. In the spring of 1668, Radisson boarded the *Eaglet* and Groseillers boarded the *Nonsuch*; the two ships sent by English investors to test the Frenchmen's claims. The *Eaglet* was forced to turn back soon after it set sail, but the *Nonsuch* reached Hudson Bay, and stayed there over the winter. The following year, it returned to England with a valuable cargo of furs.

The success of this initial voyage convinced the English investors to form the "Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" - the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in order to gain a monopoly. The HBC received a royal charter from King Charles II; no other English company could legally trade furs through Hudson Bay, or on any land which drained into the Bay. Furthermore, the Charter of 1670 stated that the HBC would be the 'true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors' of the entire Hudson Bay drainage basin - which eventually turned out to be roughly one-third of North America. The territory was named "Rupert's Land", after the company's first governor.

Such a grant was in keeping with the current European notion that land could be granted by a King (such as Charles) to his subjects (such as the owners of the HBC) on the assumption that the original inhabitants were not European could be safely ignored. The situation was complicated by the fact that no one knew exactly how much land had been granted, as no survey of the land in question had ever been completed. In fact, European maps of North America extended no further west than Lake Winnipeg, and no one knew how far it was from there to the Pacific Ocean. For more than a century after the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company, European explorers kept hoping that a quick shipping route from Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean would be found.

The HBC was a modest financial success for its investors, and its employees gradually built up a highly organized trade. Goods were shipped into Hudson Bay in large schooners, and stored at forts along the edge of the Bay. Natives (usually Cree) traveled the rivers down to the bay carrying cargoes of fur which were traded for European goods - muskets, gunpowder, blankets, axe heads, cooking utensils and steel tools. However, competition from French Canada continually annoyed the Bay men. Despite the disadvantage of having to canoe over a thousand miles and carry their trade goods over more than 200 portages, the French traders from Montreal

eventually managed to take over some of the HBC's richest trading grounds by going directly to the Native customers in their home villages. French raids from the sea also provided a great deal of excitement for the bored HBC employees; the HBC's forts were captured by the French and recaptured by the English about a dozen times in the half-century after they were established.

The HBC did not do much better when it came to exploration of its lands, which was one of the main conditions set by the Royal Charter of 1670. Major expeditions inland to explore the interior of North America were not mounted until twenty years after the founding of the Company, when Henry Kelsey made it as far as the western plains (1690) without finding any trace of the Pacific Ocean. Kelsey's explorations were ignored in England, as were those of William Stuart (1715) who was sent inland accompanied by a Native guide, a Chipewyan woman named Thanadelthur. Stuart was sent by James Knight, who was killed in 1719 on an expedition of his own, this time to explore the west coast of Hudson Bay and find a route past North America to the Pacific Ocean. Such a route, if it had existed, would have provided an easy shipping route to the rich markets of China.

After the death of Knight, there was a general reluctance to explore inland for almost four decades. Opponents of the company in England began to say rather pointedly that if the HBC did not explore the lands granted to it under the Royal Charter of 1670, the Charter should be revoked. In addition, French competition based in Montreal was now moving far inland, intercepting the HBC's main sources of furs. As a result, the company sent Anthony Henday on an exploratory mission in 1753. The conquest of New France by Britain in 1760 took the pressure off, and things began to look somewhat better for the HBC. In 1771, Samuel Hearne walked almost 6,000 km (3,500 miles) to prove that there was no shipping route which could directly connect Hudson Bay with the western Arctic ocean, destroying the century-old hope that an easy passage could be found.

The respite from St. Lawrence-based competition did not last long. Scottish and American traders began putting heavy pressure on the Bay men, taking over where the French left off, and using French methods to carry the trade inland. In response, the HBC established its first inland fort about 100 km (60 miles) west of what is now The Pas, Manitoba. Cumberland House, as this fort was called, was established in 1774 by Samuel Hearne. After the American Revolution, the Montreal traders formed the North West Company (NWC) and competition between the two companies intensified, a situation that would last until the two companies merged in 1821..

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate factual knowledge and analytical skill. Through class discussion and group work the students will demonstrate an awareness of the early history of the Hudson's Bay Company, its French Canadian origins, the nature of the HBC Charter granted by Charles II of England, and the nature of the competition offered by French traders moving inland from Montréal.

IMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The students will be evaluated on their group presentations as follows:

Content 10 marks

Quality of Expression 5 marks

INTRODUCTION:

Have the students view the material on the early history of the Hudson's Bay Company with the following questions as a guide:

Which two men were the founding fathers of the Hudson's Bay Company?

Where were they from?

Why did they have to go to England?

Who granted the HBC a Royal Charter?

Why was this important to the Hudson's Bay Company?

What was the main difference between the French and HBC systems of fur-trading?

DISCUSSION:

Use the questions from the Introduction (above) as a guide, leading the class in the discussion.

EXERCISE:

Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students. Institute debates on the following topic:

Why was the King of England able to grant such a large piece of North American territory to the Hudson's Bay Company? Should this have been allowed?

BATTLE FOR CONTROL: NWC vs. HBC

By 1766, the Hudson's Bay Company had their first inkling that the "pedlars" from Montreal were posing a serious threat. They were establishing inland posts, and intercepting furs which traditionally were brought down to the Bayside HBC posts. The HBC responded by moving inland to meet the challenge, building their first inland post (Cumberland House) at Pine Lake Island in 1774. But a lack of experienced men and canoes would continually hamper their efforts. The "pedlars" from Montreal had the advantage of both, as well as a reliable transportation system. By 1783 their loose associations were formalized, and the HBC could now put a name to their chief rival: the North West Company.

The Hudson's Bay Company continued to move inland along the Saskatchewan, competing for the same furs as the North West Company, with some success. They introduced the use of flat-bottomed "York boats" on the Saskatchewan in answer to their transportation problems, and finally penetrated the rich Athabasca country in 1791. Problems, however, continued to dog the company. With the push inland, company servants in the Interior were more dispersed as well as further away from their London directors, and even officers in the field had little opportunity to consult. By contrast, the North West Company boasted the leadership of actual shareholders in the field, who met annually at the company's inland headquarters.

By the early 1800's the Hudson's Bay Company was losing large amounts of money every year due to North West Company competition, and was in danger of going out of business. At this point, a trio of energetic young noblemen took over the management of the Hudson's Bay Company - Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk; Andrew Wedderburn Colville; and John Halkett. They adopted a policy of non-defeat, and established new rules that encouraged HBC employees to show initiative and firmness when opposing NWC rivals. One of the new HBC directors was a strong advocate of settlement, and proposed that the company support such a project. The company supported the scheme on the basis that the settlement would serve as an agricultural and labour base for their fur trading operations, and in 1812 the first settlers arrived at the juncture of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers just south of Lake Winnipeg.

The Red River Colony, as Selkirk's settlement was called, was not welcomed by the North West Company. It was positioned right in the middle of NWC trade routes and provisioning posts, and the implications of this made the Nor'Westers more than just a little nervous. In particular, the NWC was concerned that the trade in *pemmican* – the dried buffalo meat that fuelled the company's canoe brigades across the plains -- would be disrupted by the settlement.

Their fears were realized when the colony's governor, Miles Macdonnell, issued a "proclamation" making it illegal for métis hunters to trade buffalo meat to the North West Company, angering both the Nor'Westers and the métis hunters who relied upon the trade. Tensions in the area rose to the point where open attacks were made upon the colony. In the summer of 1816, the colony was destroyed when a fight between a group of mixed-blood hunters (now called Métis) and Selkirk's settlers on the prairie near Fort Douglas ended with the deaths of twenty-one settlers.

These attacks provoked a response; Lord Selkirk had already hired about one hundred soldiers to defend the Red River Colony. Upon hearing of the destruction of the Colony, Selkirk obtained warrants for the arrest of certain NWC partners. Armed with the warrants and his hired soldiers, Selkirk made his way to Fort William and made his arrests. He then occupied the North West Company headquarters and sent the arrested company partners to Montreal to face trial.

The legal battles resulting from the attack at the Red River, the seizure of Fort William, and the arrest of the NWC partners dragged on for years, and were a serious financial drain on both companies. By 1821, the leaders of both companies realized that further court costs would benefit no one but the companies' lawyers, and the exhausted fur trade giants merged. The Hudson's Bay Company name was retained in order to forestall competition in the fur trade - the Royal Charter granted by King Charles II in 1670 was still valid for the new company, and the Charter made it illegal for any other British company to compete with the HBC in the North American fur trade.

After the merger, the Hudson's Bay Company took complete control of the fur trade in western Canada from Lake Superior to the Pacific, and re-organized the fur trade to use the shorter shipping routes through Hudson Bay instead of the long river routes from Montreal. Many forts along the Montreal-based route, such as Fort William, were abandoned because they were no longer needed. The fur traders' Native customers were forced to pay higher prices, as the merger meant the end of the competition that had kept prices low. Ironically, soon after the merger of 1821, the price of beaver fur in Europe fell as beaver-felt top hats were replaced by the cheaper silk top hats. The Hudson's Bay Company finally sold most of its land to the Dominion of Canada in 1870, in return for £300,000. The Company continued to trade furs until 1987, when it finally sold its fur auction house and stores in Canada's north to concentrate on its retail operations, which include Zellers and The Bay department stores. The story takes an odd twist at this point; the HBC sold its 187 northern stores to a new company bearing the name of its old enemy – the North West Company.

BATTLE FOR CONTROL: NWC vs. HBC.

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate factual knowledge and analytical skill. Through class discussion and group work the students will demonstrate an awareness of the conflict between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, how the conflict was resolved, and the subsequent history of the HBC.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes. Presentation time as required.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

The students will be evaluated on their group presentations as follows:

Content 10 marks

Quality of Expression 5 marks

INTRODUCTION:

Have the students view the material on The NWC vs. HBC.

DISCUSSION:

The following questions will be presented for class discussion:

Why were the NWC and HBC involved in such a bitter conflict?

Why did this conflict centre on the HBC settlement at the Red River?

Who was involved in the conflict at the Red River?

What were the aims of the NWC? Of the HBC? Of the Métis?

Why did the fur-trading companies merge?

What happened to the fur trade after the merger?

Discussion should highlight the differing aspirations of the Métis, the HBC and the NWC, with emphasis on the competition between the two Companies and questions of legality - of the HBC Charter granted by Charles II in 1670, of the Colony's Pemmican Proclamation, of the NWC's role in attacks on the settlement at the Red River, and the HBC seizure of Fort William.

EXERCISE:

Assign further research at the local or school library, and have the students write a short essay on the Métis and the Riel Rebellions.

Voyageur Contracts

Voyageur contracts with the North West Company were simple documents. Spaces were left on the document to record all of the information necessary to hire a voyageur. Some of the data on these forms included the name of the voyageur and his duties. Contracts also recorded a voyageur's place of origin and his destination. In addition, rates of pay and supplies were documented on these pieces of paper. As a final measure, the agreement was signed by the voyageur. An "x" was the general signature of the voyageurs as many were unable to write their names. Company representatives observed the signing of these documents.

Many of the contracts were signed in Montreal, the headquarters of the Canadian fur trade. Contracts signed in Montreal were witnessed by a notary public. This was done prior to the departure of canoes leaving for Fort William. During the Rendezvous contracts were often renewed while so many voyageurs were available in one place. *Hommes du nord*, men who paddled between Fort William and the West, often signed contracts while still in the interior.

Position in the Canoe

Unlike tradesmen, voyageurs did not have to apprentice before they signed on with the North West Company. They gained experience as *milieu*, or men who paddled in the middle of the canoe. Their primary job in the canoe was to paddle and follow the direction of their guides.

The *avant* sat in the bow of the canoe. Skill and experience was required for this position because in fast and dangerous water, it was the duty of the *avant* to guide the canoe through safely. By following the pace set by the *avant*, voyageurs were able to synchronize the rhythm of their paddling, which caused the canoe to travel more efficiently through the water.

The *gouvernail* was the voyageur at the back of the canoe. This man, like the *avant*, was more experienced in travelling the rivers and lakes. The *gouvernail* navigated through the water. This job was difficult because the men in the canoe and the size of the vessel reduced his range of vision.

Guides were the highest-ranking of all the voyageurs in a canoe. Not every canoe had a guide. As the man in charge of a group of canoes travelling together, the guide made the decisions and gave the orders. Based on their knowledge of the rivers and lakes, it was the guide's duty to safely direct brigades of canoes. They were also answerable for all theft and loss of goods. At Fort William, guides and interpreters were the only voyageurs who stayed inside the palisade and dined in the Great Hall. Guides often served as the principal interpreters in business dealings with the Natives.

While in the canoe the bourgeois were not required to paddle. This man often recorded events in his journal or watched the scenery. Although the North West Company partner was technically in charge, he would usually let the guide make all of the travel decisions. Voyageurs, in turn, respectfully called the gentleman “*bourgeois*”. This common term for the upper class during the colonial days of New France carried on in to the British fur trade period.

Term of Service

The *hommes du nord* were the voyageurs that travelled the long routes between the Pacific Ocean and Fort William. Usually, but not always, they served three year contracts for the North West Company. Some contracts were signed for four or five years. All of this time was spent in the interior or at Fort William. *Hommes du nord* were better paid because of the canoe skills they had developed, the more difficult routes they had to follow, and the precarious lifestyle they lead. By having more income, these voyageurs were able to purchase more personal effects.

Mangeurs de lard were mainly responsible for the trip between Montreal and Fort William. On some occasions, their contracts required them to travel about two weeks past Fort William to the North West Company post at Lac la Pluie. Like the *hommes du nord*, the *mangeurs de lard* usually signed three year contracts. However, unlike the *hommes du nord*, they spent only five to six months per each year of their three-year contract in the active service of the North West Company.

Corvée

While at Fort William, a *mangeur du lard* had to fulfill many duties before he could relax. These duties, called *corvée*, were also part of a voyageur contract. The *corvée* required of a voyageur comes from the work that *habitant* farmers had to do for the seigneur in the days of New France.

As part of his work, a voyageur constructed new buildings and fixed old ones. Canoes also had to be repaired and new ones built. Voyageurs were also expected to unpack, dry, sort, and repack the fur that came in from the West. Some voyageurs performed sentry duty to watch out for fires. Others were required to work in the garden and on the farm. Several voyageurs assisted the gentlemen and the clerks in the shops and stores of Fort William. It appears that only the *hommes du nord* were exempt from doing *corvée*.

Money

Voyageurs' salaries were generally paid in livres. A livre was worth approximately the same as a shilling. During the French period, livres existed in the form of coins. Later, cards and paper money were used. During the British

period of the fur trade, the livre system was mostly used for book keeping purposes. Thirty livres were equal to one Pound Sterling. One Pound Sterling was roughly equivalent to \$5.00 American.

Piastre, or the Spanish silver dollar, was another currency mentioned in voyageur contracts. While a voyageur's wage was negotiated in livres, piastres were used to pay cash advances.

Average Wages Per Year in Livres

Job Title	Mangeurs de lard	Hommes du nord
Milieu	200 – 250	300 – 800
Les Bouts (avant + gouvernail)	300 – 400	800 – 1200
Guides	600 – 800	1000 – 1500

On occasion a contract stipulated that a voyageur's pay was determined by the condition of his post. Voyageurs were required to give 1% of their pay to a "Voyageur Fund". This was established to help old, sick and retired voyageurs in Lower Canada.

Equipment

A voyageur was allotted a certain amount of equipment, or supplies, that adequately served his needs while under contract to the company. The equipment given to a voyageur was considered an advance of their earnings. Each successive contract usually resulted in an increase in the amount of materials given to a voyageur. If married or supporting a family in the interior, a voyageur was sometimes given supplies for their use. The equipment that a voyageur received differed from one man to the next, but generally included items such as: blankets, trousers, shirts, kerchiefs, moccasins, molton cloth, tobacco, and small and large knives.

Voyageur Contracts Exercises

This is an exercise to demonstrate the student's comprehension of voyageur life through the facility of the engage contract as used by the North West Company.

- Each member (or selected members) of the class must negotiate with their teacher (who shall represent the firm of McTavish, McGillivray & Co.), the terms of their contract, or engagement.

The term engage, referring to the employees of the company, is derived from the term engagement. This term encompasses all employees below the rank of Gentleman, such as tradesmen, sailors and voyageurs.

- An alternate scenario would have one or more of the students representing the company. The teacher could then assume the role of the notary public.
- The average wage for a milieu (the middle man in a canoe crew) in 1815 was for 250 livres for the trip between Montreal and Fort William.

An additional 150 livres would be earned if the voyageur made the trip from Fort William to Lac la Pluie and back. (The Athabaska brigade could not make the round trip from Fort Chippawayan to Fort William and back before the rivers froze up. It was necessary for the pork-eaters to transport trade goods farther west to Lac la Pluie for the Athabaska brigade).

- A typical advance on the engage' s salary was 8 dollars, with an additional 4 dollars on leaving Montreal.

Note: the North West Co. hired a clerk Antoine Laundrieau, who would track down men who tried to run out on their contract.

- The majority of the voyageurs were recruited during the winter. They would gather together in Montreal (the Old Market) before the canoe brigades left for la Chien.
- Since virtually all of voyageurs were illiterate, the contracts were attested before a notary public. The notary, as a knowledgeable but disinterested party would (it was assumed) insure that the voyageur would fully understand the commitments he was undertaking by signing the contract.

Mr. J.G. Beek was notary for most of the North West Company engagements.

- Typically, the notary would write down the name of the voyageur, who would make his mark. This was usually in the form of an ' X' , see below:

sa
Michel (X) Guillotte
marque

The contract would also be signed by the North West Company Representative and witnessed by the notary.

- When carrying out this exercise, treat the process as a job interview. Consider the following points:

Height: A man under 5' 4" was considered lucky. He was more likely to be selected as a voyageur as he would take up less room in the canoe.

Position applied for: avant, gouvernail or milieu? (be prepared to advance your case).

Reasons for wanting to sign on: adventure, money, escape, family tradition?

Qualifications: skill with the paddle, strength and endurance, knowledge of the routes, ability to read the weather, play the fiddle, knowledge of many voyageur songs and the ability to sing them (be careful, you might have to demonstrate!), ability to repair and maintain canoes, some skill as the blacksmith or carpenter (the company values men who can fill in when the need requires).

Previous experience: have you served as a voyageur before? If so where, when and with whom? (have your story straight, you might be questioned).

Salary expected: This should be based on the specific job (avant, gouvernail, milieu), and destination (Michilimakinac 150, Fort William 250, Lac la Pluie 400, the North West 800 (as a hommes du nord). If you have an additional skill that the company may require, this can be added to the contract (i.e. 150 livres extra for working as a blacksmith at his post)

A chanteur was paid extra, as his singing helped lift the morale of the men and made the paddling easier.

A man who could play the fife, fiddle or any such musical instrument could relieve the boredom of a winter posting in the north-west.

One part of the contract that could vary significantly was the advance. A typical advance for a milieu would be 8 dollars when the contract was signed, and another 4 dollars when the voyageurs left Montreal for la Chien. Can you convince the Montreal Agent to increase this amount? Why do you need it? (i.e. to pay off family debts). One milieu in 1815 received an advance of 25 dollars. Some of this money was used by the voyageur for room and board in Montreal, waiting for the brigade to depart for the interior. You could negotiate with the partner for room and/or board in lieu of some of the money in advance.

Food and Drink

The diet of a voyageur varied upon where he travelled. A voyageur who travelled from Montreal to Fort William ate a diet of corn with salted pork (“corn and grease”). These voyageurs were nicknamed the *mangeurs de lard*. Sacks of peas, barrels of pork fat, and sacks of biscuits were loaded into the canoes in Montreal. Native groups, especially those around Lake Huron, traded corn to the North West Company that was used to feed the *mangeurs de lard*. The corn was mixed with peas in a kettle and placed over the fire. Once the mixture had cooked for a while, strips of pork were added. This would boil and simmer overnight, and biscuits were added to it the next day. *Galette*, a flat cake of bread, was commonly eaten with corn and grease. The dough was mixed in the bag of flour, the cakes formed and then fried in grease or baked in pans in the fire. Voyageurs stopped at Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie to re-supply their canoes. There they received provisions of wild rice and maple sugar.

When the voyageurs arrived at Fort William they received a *régale*. *Régale* consisted of a loaf of bread, and some butter and a cup of rum. Corn with grease were daily rations. Other provisions were purchased from Boucher’s tavern or the Cantine, including coffee, cheese, flour, maple sugar, butter, pork, sausage, ham, beef, biscuits, bread, salt, prunes, raisins, wine and spirits. Fort William was supplied with some of these items by schooners and canoe brigades as well the farm and gardens tended at this post.

Hommes du nord, who travelled through the Prairies to the Rocky Mountains, ate buffalo meat. The buffalo meat was dried, pounded into small pieces, and mixed with lard. If available, berries were also added. This mixture, called pemmican, was stored in 90 pound bags sealed with animal fat. Pemmican provided a nutritional balanced diet of protein, fat and vitamin C. Introduced by the Native peoples to the Europeans it was an important source of food that prevented scurvy, a serious disease caused by lack of vitamin C in the diet. Besides its nutritional advantages it was compact, light, versatile and filling. Fat content in pemmican was important as it enabled the body to absorb the meat. Take away the fat of carbohydrates and all food passes right through the body, making starvation a real threat.

Forts such as those along the Saskatchewan River and the Red River were supply depots for pemmican. The forts were often located at the maximum distance that a canoe brigade could cover with four packs of pemmican. The *hommes du nord* had a few options of how to eat pemmican. They could eat it plain. It was also made into a thick stew called *rubbaboo*. The pemmican was boiled with flour, water, wild onions, other wild plants and maple sugar in a large kettle. Cooking racks or tripods of slender tree trunks or branches were used to support the kettle. Pemmican, in addition, was fried with berries and plants. When prepared this way, it was called *rousseau*.

When voyageurs were travelling, they attempted to supplement their diet in a few ways. Bartering with a local Native group for food, such as oats, wild rice, maple sugar and wild game, was one option. West of Ile-à-la-Crosse and Edmonton, voyageurs added white fish and salmon to their diet. There usually was not enough time for frequent hunting, fishing, or berry picking, but canoe brigades were occasionally able to do so. Voyageurs also ate duck, turtle, muskrat, deer, bear, caribou, moose and beaver meat.

When food was scarce voyageurs became very resourceful. In his journal, Daniel Harmon, a North West Company fur trader, described several ways that he and the voyageurs combated starvation. They ate tallow, dried cherries, parchment skins, dog meat, herbs, and small fish. *Tripe du roche*, a leathery, edible lichen, also provided nourishment for voyageurs. In desperate circumstances, they also ate canoe gum. In a very interesting passage of his writings, Sir Alexander Mackenzie depicted the horrible smell of a mixture of the eggs and rancid oil of a sturgeon that his crew ate. Mackenzie wrote that the “smell of this curious dish was sufficient to sicken me without tasting it, but the hunger of my people surmounted the nauseous meal.”¹

¹ W. Kaye Lamb, ed., *The Journals and Letter of Alexander Mackenzie*, (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1970), 357.

Outcomes

Participants will gain a better understanding of the variety of foods available to specific groups of people during the Fur Trade as well as gain insight into the time and work involved in the preparation of meals.

Timeline

This could be a component of a field / nature studies trip or a stand alone in class 60 minute session.

Preparation

Familiarization with background information on the role of the voyageur and the various provisions received during their employment.

Purchasing the necessary supplies and equipment to prepare *galette*.
Accessing a portable cooking unit or fire pit to use to fry the dough mixture.

Evaluation

Comparison of the various results and problems encountered by the students during the preparation and frying of galette.

Introduction

Present an overview of the rations a voyageur received while travelling across the continent, highlighting the food distribution locations, the change of provisions during the journey and the importance of food, the fuel that enabled the voyageurs to paddle long and strenuous days.

Discussion

Compile a list of questions about the importance of the voyageur receiving proper nutrition in his diet. Maps could be used to highlight the complicated and highly organized food distribution system that was crucial to the transportation of trade goods and furs.

Exercise

Assemble ingredients for the preparation of galette

2 cups of white flour

2 heaping tbsp. of baking powder

1 cup cold water

1 cup of lard

Equipment

1 large deep frying pan

large bowl

spoon

Method

Place 1 cup of lard in frying pan for frying

Mix dry ingredients together

Add enough water to produce a dough mixture

Place mixture on a floured board and knead briefly (do not handle very long)

Pull off egg size pieces and flatten in your palm

Place lightly in the frying pan, turning over when brown

For the most part, voyageurs ate only two meals a day. Breakfast was eaten at sunrise. This meal was eaten and the canoes were reloaded in less than an hour. The second meal was eaten at sunset. These meals were often prepared by re-heating the kettle of food prepared the night before. During a break in the day, a voyageur perhaps ate a handful of dried peas with water from the river. Voyageurs often ate out of one common pot with a ladle or spoon. Sometimes a voyageur had his own tin cup or dish, or he used a rock depression as a bowl to cool his dinner.

Alcohol was used to celebrate different aspects of the journey. High wine, the customary beverage of the voyageur, was a combination of wine and brandy or rum. For transportation, alcoholic beverages were stored in kegs.

TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

A society is a group of persons that form a single community, and the condition of living together as a community. This system by which a society provides its members with those things needed or desired by the community is defined as technology.

Technology and society are interdependent. The worldview (perspective) of a society determines how its members apply the tools and materials available to them, and the material wealth of a society influence the values and experiences of the community, eventually modifying the society's world view.

Despite the fact that the basic material necessities of life are the same for people everywhere – food, shelter, and culture – people have manufactured these basic necessities in a wide variety of ways due to their different cultural, economic, and technological backgrounds.

Broadly speaking, the societies, which participated in the North American fur trade, had three approaches to manufacturing. The various native tribes of North America had completely different ideas about how, and why, and what kinds of things should be manufactured compared to the artisans of Lower Canada or the factory owners in Britain.

A Canoe is Born

In North American Native cultures, their technology was based on the family unit. Immediate or close relatives imparted all the skills required to supply food, shelter and social well being.

Although members of the community may have demonstrated superior knowledge or skill in any given area, and some skills were considered to be the prerogative of a certain group (i.e. women or men), most members of the society could manufacture and use the tools required for survival. The Native craftsman was a generalist. The user (customer) of any given item, even though they did not make that item, would be knowledgeable in the acquisition of material and the construction of that item.

Most of the materials required were obtained in the region where the people lived; but highly valued material, such as pipe stone, a particular type of flint, or native copper could be traded from hand to hand over a vast area. Indeed, the fur trade routes used by the European traders overlay the long established trade routes of the Native Americans.

There was an intimate bond between the Native Americans and their resources. To overuse any one of the resources available to them would put the society in jeopardy. For the Natives each part of their environment, be it rock, plant or animal had a soul. Therefore the tool made from these elements had a soul as well.

In a society which is nomadic or semi- nomadic, less emphasis is placed on material acquisition. When you have to carry all your possessions with you an accumulation of objects becomes an inconvenience. Status is based on reputation not material wealth. It would be preferable to live in poverty than in shame.

The manufacture of tools and clothing from raw materials can be a hard, time consuming task. At the inception of the fur trade European trade goods were appreciated for how they could make the traditional way of life easier. Many of these articles were adapted out of all recognition from their original form and function.

A list of items produced by the Ojibwa would include canoes for summer transportation and food gathering, toboggans for winter transportation and makuks (birch-bark baskets) for the storage of food and other commodities. All of these items were also of use to the fur traders and were exchanged for European trade goods.

A Canoe is born.

The North American birch-bark canoe was made entirely out of materials readily available to the builder. But to make a canoe efficiently the builder had to have a comprehensive understanding of how to select, gather, store and work the material.

As an indication of the skills required the following list contain some of knowledge required just selecting the bark for canoe construction.

1. The bark of the paper birch was the preferred material for the construction of canoes.
2. The thickest possible bark free from apparent layering, is the most desirable (for canoe construction the bark should be at least 1/8th of an inch thick).
3. The bark should be chosen for its quality rather than the size.
4. A tree, chosen for its bark should be straight (bends in the tree will cause puckering and welts in the bark of a finished canoe).
5. The bark should be relatively free of eyes (spots where old tree branches grew).
6. "Dead white bark" or bark marked by small strips, which have partly peeled away, should be rejected.
7. The lenticels (the small horizontal markings typical of birch bark) should be relatively few and far apart.
8. The best bark is gathered during a long winter thaw, or in the spring when just as the sap had begun to flow (bark taken at this time usually sticks to the inner rind, which comes away from the tree with the bark. This good quality bark was referred to as "winter bark" no matter what time of the year it was gathered).
9. "Summer bark" is a poor substitute for "winter bark" ("summer bark" readily separated into its paper-like layers, a characteristic of bark peeled in hot weather, or of poorly made bark in any season).
10. Remove the bark from a point just below the first branch of the tree to a point just above the height of the winter snow (the bark below the snow is usually rough, blemished and thin).

Before the bark was removed from a tree the Creator would be asked to give spiritual guidance in making the selection, and ceremony offering up tobacco would be (and still is) made to the four cardinal directions. The tobacco was then left at the base of the tree.

Once collected the bark would be rolled up inside out, and taken away for use or storage or trade. Birch-bark is easiest to use right after it is collected, but it can be stored away out of the sun for many years. After a thorough soaking and an application of hot water stored bark was found to be quite satisfactory.

Similar knowledge would be required to collect and prepare the other materials required to build a canoe: spruce root (preferably black spruce), cedar (preferably northern white cedar) and “spruce gum” (from the black or white spruce).

When the materials for canoe construction were acquired, the canoe was constructed from the inside-out: the birch bark skin of the canoe was sewn together using spruce root, and sewn to the gunwale. Then the interior of the canoe – the cedar sheathing and ribs – were fitted in. Finally, the seams on the bark skin were gummed with a mixture of spruce gum, animal fat, and charcoal to make the craft watertight.

The following steps detail the stages of building a birch bark canoe:

1. Laying out the building bed (preparing the site for canoe construction).
2. Riving out and shaping the gunwales (splitting out and shaping the upper edge of the canoe side).
3. Riving out and shaping the thwarts (splitting out and shaping the transverse supports that lie between the gunwales).
4. Mortising the thwarts into the gunwales and lashing them together to produce a gunwale frame.
5. Laying the gunwale frame on the building bed and pounding into the ground stakes along the side of the frame.
6. Removing the stakes and the gunwale frame.
7. Placing the birch bark (one piece or several sheets sewn together) over the bed.
8. Replacing the gunwale frame in its original spot and weighting it down with boards and stones.
9. Replacing the stakes in their holes while turning the bark up around the gunwale frame.
10. Attaching the gunwales
11. Installing the stem pieces (the bow and stern sections of the canoe).
12. Installing the thwarts.
13. Treating the inside seam work (sealing the interior seams of the canoe with spruce gum).
14. Sheathing the inside of the canoe (installing a thin layer of cedar lathes that protect the bark from interior abrasion and help distribute the force exerted on the outer skin of the canoe by the ribs).
15. Installing the ribs in the canoe (the ribs, made from split cedar that is steamed and shaped, give the shape, strength and flexibility to the canoe).
16. Gumming the seams (sealing the outer seams with pitch, a mixture of spruce gum, tallow (animal fat) and charcoal).

A Keg is Crafted

At the time of the fur trade European society in British North America was a predominately agricultural one. An agricultural society is sedentary. With a sedentary population, the inconvenience of material acquisition no longer applies.

The introduction of revolutionary agricultural techniques into Lower Canada by the British, and their improvement of the transportation system, meant the colony was able to support a much larger population, that now had the wealth to purchase goods.

The new business elite, made up primarily of expatriate Scotsman, had a much greater interest in the here and now. Making a profit was not considered a sin. Status was less concerned with family connections and character, and more value was given to conspicuous consumption and acquisition of material wealth.

The increase in population, the improvement in agriculture, and the increasing number of businesses, created new and larger outlets for the products of skilled artisans.

Although the Industrial Revolution was well underway in Britain, the technology of the North American colonies was predominantly pre-revolution, based on the Domestic System. The work was done at home and often involved the whole family.

The most notable difference between the Native American craftsman and the craftsman of Lower Canada was that that latter was now a specialist in a trade. In larger cities the basic trades themselves could be divided into specialities. For example, from the blacksmith trade sprung the crafts of farriers, ornamental-iron workers, coopers' hoopmakers, ship's smith, whitesmiths, axe and hoe makers and more. Even these divisions could be sub-divided.

A more subtle difference was that the European craftsman generally bought his raw material from someone else. The tradesman was one step removed from his environment; nature was to be used for personal gain. And while there was a remarkable understanding of the character and uses of his stock in trade, and great pride in his products, the tradesman of Lower Canada did not find the same spiritual significance.

Although the tradesman of Lower Canada was usually a specialist (in smaller communities a tradesman might also be a farmer, or carry out more than one trade), he learned his trade in a manner not dissimilar from the Native Culture. Like the Native artisan, the skill was in the hands of the craftsman.

Knowledge of the 'mysteries of the trade' was passed on orally from father to son (and occasionally daughter). When an apprentice was taken on, a formal contract would be signed; but the training would be the same. In effect, the master craftsman took on the role of a second father.

Most work was 'made to order'. In larger communities, like Montreal, the tradesman might manufacture extra stock and sell it 'off the shelf'. In some trades, such as coopering, the character of the trade was such that production was roughly divided between the two.

The tradesman lived where he worked. When a customer came to make an order he would find the tradesman at work in his shop. They would discuss what the requirements of the customer were and determine a price. The customer was free to look about to see the work in progress. If modifications had to be made to meet the customers needs, this was done. The tradesman, proficient in his trade and knowledgeable of his material, was there to advise his customer.

A Keg is crafted.

Like the North American birch bark canoe, a barrel manufactured in Montreal could be made entirely out of materials readily available to the builder (iron hoop stock imported from Britain being the exception). But unlike the Native canoe builder, the cooper would purchase his stave stock from a local supplier. The wood was cut in the late fall or winter and allowed to season for use in the spring of the next year.

There are three main branches of coopering; dry, white, and wet. The dry cooper made casks for solid materials such as flour, tobacco, sugar or crockery. The white cooper made pails, butter churns, wash tubs, and other related items for dairy and household use. The most highly skilled cooper was the wet cooper, who made watertight casks for liquids. This was exacting work and the staves had to fit accurately. The cask must be able to withstand the strain of fermenting liquids and rough handling during transport.

To carry out his work the cooper had access to a great variety of tools, among them the broad axe, adze, round shave, cooper's pincer, mallet, froe, drift, shaving horse, jointer, croze, drawknife, beak horn, chisel, topping plane and chive. The native canoe builder could make a canoe using a hatchet, awl and crooked knife.

Let us say, for example that our cooper has negotiated an order for kegs from Mr. John Molson, the owner of the prominent Montreal brewery (the negotiations would include materials used, capacity and cost).

Selecting wood from his well-seasoned stave stock, the cooper would go through the following steps to craft the kegs to order.

1. First preparation of the staves.
 - Cut stave to rough shape and size
 - Trim the outside so its shape is convex
 - Cut down the width at each end so that the middle is greater than the ends
 - Smooth out the staves with a draw knife
 - Finish the staves on the jointer by bevelling the edges
2. Setting-up the cask.
 - The staves are set up within the first head hoop
 - Trim the final stave to fit
 - Drive the first bulge hoop into place
3. Raising and firing the cask.
 - Dampen the staves in water
 - Invert over a small fire in a cresset to steam the staves

- Draw together the flaring staves with a windlass
 - Drive the second head hoop into place
 - Drive the second bulge hoop into place
4. Trim the staves and cut the croze.
 - Trim the uneven staves with a hatchet
 - Smooth the edges with the topping plane
 - Smooth the interior of the staves with a round shave
 - Cut the recess for the croze with the howel
 - Chamfer the staves with the chamfer
 - Cut the croze with the croze
 5. Prepare the heads and crosspieces.
 - Lay out the planks that will for the head
 - Clap them in place
 - Mark out the size of the head with a compass
 - Saw out the planks to size with bow saw
 - Chamfer the edge of each plank so they will fit in the croze
 6. Mount the heads.
 - Loosen the head-hoop of the cask
 - Place the two corner-pieces cants into the croze of the staves
 - Place the side pieces into the croze
 - Place the centre piece of the head into the croze using the cooper's vice
 - Replace the head-hoop and tighten
 7. Place and fasten the hoops around the cask.
 - The cooper measures the length of his hoop by literally walking around the cask and pressing the hoop into place, and marks the hoop where the excess portion is to be cut off
 - The hoop is notched, bound together and placed over the cask
 - The hoop is forced into place with a mallet and driver
 8. Cut out the bunghole.
 - As both heads of a liquid cask are securely fastened it is necessary to have an opening in the middle of the cask to extract the liquid within. This is referred to as a bun-hole and the plug used for closing the bunghole is called a bung. The tool used to bore this opening is called a bung-borer

*The following list illustrates cooperage production in Lower Canada during the fur trade era:
Port of Quebec – Exports in 1815*

1,044,328	pieces	staves and heading
48,550	pieces	hoops
1,920	barrels	flour
30	tierces	pork
49	tierces	beef
6	casks	ham
115	kegs	hogs lard
552	kegs	butter
52	casks	ale & beer
63	casks	essence spruce
868	tierces	salmon
2,028	barrels	herrings
2	casks	snuff
4	casks	hemp
8	casks	cranberries
836	barrels	onions
4,326	casks	pot and pearl ashes

Yarn is Manufactured

The factory worker in Britain during the Industrial Revolution had little in common with either the Native craftsman or the tradesman of Lower Canada.

The most notable difference between the tradesman of Lower Canada and the factory worker of Britain was that the factory worker was a specialist in one stage of production. Specialisation had reached the point where a worker was incapable of manufacturing a product from start to finish.

The worker was not only disconnected from the source of his raw material, but also separated from the customer, the ultimate source of income from the sale of finished merchandise. The customer (even further removed from the points of origin of the goods he wishes to purchase) was now presented with a finished item that may not exactly meet the requirements that he desires, and the person presenting this item for sale did not have sufficient knowledge to advise him.

The work was no longer carried out in a family setting. Because of low wages, the rest of the family was probably employed as well, and child labour became common. The Industrial Revolution may have created more jobs than it eliminated, but many of these jobs were at lower wages, and in working conditions that were foreign and often damaging to the new employees.

The worker was no longer self-employed; the individual could not afford the capital to establish a competitive business, and the old traditional methods could not compete with the factory system.

The work was no longer based on the traditional 'made to order', production as required of the old trades. The ebb and flow of production then considered natural and correct; was now considered to be the bad habits of irregularity, bad discipline and laziness and the preoccupation with the present. These were to be replaced with the good habits of punctuality and regularity suited to the new industrialised factory system. Everything moved to the ticking of the time clock.

The employer imparted the limited training required. Gone was the 'Golden Age of British craftsmanship'; the skill had been taken from the hands of the artisan and built into the machines. These same machines and the power that they required led to an increased use of fossil fuels such as coal, and the pollution that comes with it.

Many lamented the loss of the old ways, and looked nostalgically back to the 'Yeomen of Olde England' in golden bucolic scenes. Nevertheless the Industrial Revolution increased the national wealth of Britain, created jobs, and lowered the cost of goods to the point that many more people could afford to buy them; and incidentally, supplied the trade goods for the North West Company.

Yarn is manufactured

The process of thread has been known for thousands of years. At first the wool or cotton or other material to be spun was held on a large stick, called a distaff, and the spinster drew her supplies from this, holding a small tuft of fibres which extended to the suspended thread. The spindle, to which the thread was attached, would be spun, and as the spindle rotated it put a twist into the thread. This twisting laid the fibres into a spiral formation and compressed them together to make a relatively strong thread. The finished part of the thread was then wound around the spindle, and the end extending from the untwisted fibres would be secured in a notch at the top of the spindle and the process repeated until the thread was finished. Refinements were made in the centuries that followed with the addition of a hand-powered and then a foot-powered (using a foot treadle) wheel that rotated the spindle, and later the flyer and bobbin to twist and wind the thread.

This process of spinning and drawing was made easier with the introduction of the jersey or muckle wheel (probably from China). This machine held the spindle in a horizontal position, the spindle being rotated by a belt or cord that went around a pulley attached to the spindle and the vertical, hand powered wheel.

The twisting process was carried out by holding the spinning thread at an obtuse angle with the spindle, causing the thread to wind spirally along the spindle and then to slip off the end of the spindle, thereby inserting a twist in the length held by the spinster. At the same time, the spinster releases more fibres and moves her and further from the spindle, so drawing out the thread to the required fineness. When the length is completed her hand was moved to hold the thread approximately at right angles to the spindle, causing the thread to wind up on the spindle.

The next refinement in the spinning process was introduced by Leonardo da Vinci who added the foot treadle to power the wheel (thus freeing up one hand), and of greater importance, the flyer and bobbin. The flyer rotated at a different speed than the bobbin causing the fibres between the flyer and the spinsters hand to twist into a thread, while the completed thread wound itself around the rotating bobbin. Twisting and winding were now simultaneous, instead of being two intermittent operations.

For the weaving industry it was necessary for the spinster to maintain the same thickness or count of the yarn she was spinning for a particular order. In the case of cotton yarn, the number of 'hanks' (840 ids.) in 1 lb. avoirdupois expresses the count; e.g. a 30s yarn would measure 30 X 840 ids. to 1 lb. This was a difficult standard to maintain, and would depend entirely on experience in the control of the operation.

The spinning wheels and their operators were part of the domestic system, a common way of organising industry before the industrial revolution. In this system the manufacturer of cloth would take supplies of wool or cotton to the cottages for spinning into yarn and the weaving into cloth. When the yarn and/or cloth was finished, the manufacturer would return to pick it up for an agreed payment, and then sold it.

For centuries the production of yarn and woven cloth was basically in balance one commodity not being in great excess over the other. For the spinners of cotton yarn this changed with the invention of the fly shuttle. This device (invented by John Kay in 1733) was an attachment for the traditional handloom. The fly-shuttle loom increased the output of handlooms and led to an ever-increasing scarcity of yarns. This acted as a spur to inventors intent upon the construction of machines which would spin more than one or two threads per spinster.

First came James Hargreaves' hand cranked spinning jenny that could spin dozens of bobbins of yarn at a time. A small spinning jenny could be used in a cottage. This was followed by Richard Arkwright's water frame, another spinning machine that could be water or steam powered. Unlike the jenny, which needed three separate operations to spin and wind a length of yarn, the water frame had a continuous action that made it suitable for the application of power. Spinning had moved irrevocably from the farm cottage to the industrial factory. By 1788 some 20,000 jennies and 143 Arkwright-type mills were in use and the spinning wheel was virtually obsolete.

A Manchester factory worker, concerned with monitoring the operation of machinery had replaced the skilled spinster (changing the bobbins and joining broken threads were jobs frequently done by young children). The supply of yarn exceeded the ability of the fly-shuttle loom to produce cloth, and so the industrial revolution spiralled upward in ever faster cycles (the cloth weaving bottleneck was solved by Dr. Edmund Cartwright's power loom).

TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate factual knowledge and analytical skill. Through class discussion and the writing assignment students will demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between society and technology.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

Written assignment: Content (5 marks)
 Expression (3 marks)
 Mechanics (2 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

View the material on Technology and Society, and lead the class in the following discussion:

DISCUSSION:

1. What sources of energy were used to produce the canoe, the keg and yarn? (human muscle, water power, fossil fuels)
2. What is the relationship of the consumer (user of the finished product) to the producer in each example? (canoe, keg, and yarn). Compare this to present-day consumer-producer relationships.
3. Why can Arkwright's water frame produce so much more yarn? (The teacher leads the class in a discussion. The important thing to keep in mind here is that while the spinster relies on her own muscle power to provide the energy to make the cloth. The machine operator basically supervises as the machine takes fossil fuel energy from coal, in the process unleashing far more energy than the human body can produce. To relate this to something more in line with the every day experience of the students, a car can travel much faster than a human can because it relies on fossil fuel energy rather than on muscle power or some other renewable form of energy.)

EXERCISE:

Have the students complete one of the following writing assignments:

1. Write a one-page essay explaining which of the societies (On the Kaministiquia, Upper Canada; Montreal, Lower Canada or Manchester, England) you would best like to live in, and why.
2. Write a one-page essay about a technological change which taking place today. How will this change affect the way people live and work? What are the different ways that this technology could be applied?

3. Write a one-page essay, or create a chart outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each type of production? Keep economic and cultural factors in mind.

4. Take as an example an article of clothing that you are wearing right now. Do a research project to find out where it was made, how it was made, and who made it.

NAVIGATION

*“On my return, please Heaven I hope to take the Courses more exact, as the whirlpools keep the Compass continually agitated.”*¹-David Thompson, 1811.

The European men involved in the Canadian fur trade were concerned not only with the trade itself, but also with exploration of the New World and the possibility of an overland route to China. Well-known explorers David Thompson, Simon Fraser and Sir Alexander Mackenzie were active members of the North West Company. They took European navigational tools on their journeys in order to record and map the waterways of North America. While the compass is often used in conjunction with a map in order to travel from one place to the next, no map of the interior of North America existed for the traders to use. The early European explorers relied on the knowledge of Native guides to show them the routes, and used compasses and other navigational tools in order to keep accurate records of these routes.

The Compass

The magnetic compass has existed since the twelfth century. The earliest magnetic compass was a magnetised needle stuck through a straw and floated in water. The needle was magnetised by being touched with a *lodestone*, a naturally magnetic iron ore. This form of compass was not very accurate and was used only when the more traditional indicators of direction, such as the winds and stars, were blowing unpredictably or obscured by cloud.

By the fifteenth century, the compass had been improved. Instead of being floated in water, the needle pivoted on a pin stuck through the base of the wooden bowl that housed the compass. It was known, by this time, that magnetic North and geographical North did not coincide. To address this problem, compass makers in France began to adjust the needle to indicate true North. This caused problems, because the relationship between true North and magnetic North changes depending on where the compass reading is taken. Compasses were therefore adjusted to indicate true North in a particular region. If, however, compasses were used outside the area for which they were intended, or worse still, two compasses made for different regions were used together, the results could be confusing to say the least. Christopher Columbus carried two compasses in his fifteenth century voyages, one that showed true North in Flanders and one, likely made in Geneva, that showed only magnetic North. Columbus was not aware that the difference between the two was intentional and was, instead, puzzled by the readings the compasses gave.

Several solutions to the problem of how to get accurate compass readings were attempted. The first solution was for navigators to carry several different compasses, one made for each part of the world in which they would be traveling. Another solution was to use unadjusted compasses and find the location by taking a bearing on the sun and then adjust the reading of the compass. Some compasses were produced with adjustable needles so that the compass could be set at the correct angle for the part of the world in which it was being used.

¹ Thompson.150.

The compasses used during the fur trade era were very similar to those developed in the sixteenth century. They featured a magnetised needle on a pivot housed in wood with a glass face. The problem with this design was that the needle was unstable. To get an accurate reading, the compass had to be kept relatively still, because the needle was pivoting freely and would be inclined to follow any motion of the compass itself. Of course, there were occasions when keeping the compass steady was not possible. David Thompson made note of this problem in his journal as he was exploring the lower Columbia River in 1811:

The Courses [Thompson's records of his journey] are not so correct as I could wish - the strength of the Current caused many Eddies & small whirlpools, which generally bore the Canoe from side to side so that the Compass was always vibrating....²

The Sextant

While in no way a replacement for Native guides, the compass, along with other navigational instruments, such as the sextant and chronometer, allowed fur traders and explorers to keep extensive records of the routes they were shown.

The sextant allows the user to discover the latitude and longitude of his position by measuring the angle between the horizon and a star or planet. To find this angle, the navigator looks through the glass sight on the side of the sextant, making sure to hold it level with the horizon. For navigational purposes, it is possible to take a reading from the moon, Jupiter, or the North Star, but the easiest heavenly body to use is the sun.

The first thing which the navigator must find out is the point at which *local noon* (the point when the sun is highest in the sky) actually happens. All other measurements in simple navigation are based upon local noon. Keep in mind that when it shows noon on your clock at home, it is not necessarily *local noon*. The noon on your clock is a sort of average noon for whatever time zone you are in. It is only accurate for the very centre of the time zone.

To find out local noon, a navigator must measure the angle between the sun and the horizon with the sextant as noon approaches. The navigator uses the sextant to measure the angle between the sun and the horizon, before and after noon, taking (for example) five readings. The angle first grows, then gets smaller. When the angle starts to get smaller again, the navigator knows that noon has passed. When the angle was greatest (the yellow sun in the diagram), it was local noon.

Latitude and Longitude

Latitude is the distance from the equator, and is measured in degrees. There are 90 degrees of latitude between the *equator* (which circles the centre of the earth) and each *pole* (the earth rotates around an imaginary line drawn through the center of the earth between the north and south poles).

² Thompson. 142.

The relationship between latitude and the height of heavenly bodies has been known since the mid-1500's when the Portuguese began to conduct extensive seagoing voyages. The determination of latitude is based on the principle that if one stands at the equator the sun is directly overhead at noon, but as one moves away, towards the poles, the sun begins to sink in the sky and its height above the horizon gets lower in proportion to the increasing latitude. Thus, the sun appears slightly lower in the sky at noon when one is standing at Fort William rather than in Florida.

The angle between the horizon and the sun at noon is written down and compared to a chart in a book, called a *nautical almanac*, which tells the navigator what latitude he or she is at. If the sun and earth remained at the same angle to each other all year round, then for any line of latitude, the sun would always be at the same angle at noon. However, because the sun changes angle relative to the earth every day of the year, the nautical almanac's table of values are corrected for every angle and every day of the year.

Longitude lines run north and south and pass through both poles. They are measured in degrees from Greenwich, England. It was pointed out as early as 1532 that if a traveler were to set her watch at local time and take it with her on a voyage, she would be able to find her new position on the earth by comparing the time at her new location with the time shown on her watch; her watch would keep a record of the time at the beginning of her trip. For example, if a woman in London, England set her watch and then traveled to Halifax, her watch would show twelve noon when it was still early morning. By determining the difference in time between London and Halifax, their relative positions on the earth can be found. The only drawback to this theory is that for a long time there were no chronometers that were reliable or sturdy enough for travelling. The first accurate chronometers were built in the 1770's and were used by Captains Cook, Bligh, and Vancouver on their voyages.

To find longitude, a navigator must use the sextant to find out when it is local noon, then use the *chronometer* to compare local noon to the time in a place called Greenwich in England. This is called finding "Greenwich Time". Greenwich is on the line of zero degrees longitude, and each hour of time difference equals 15 degrees of longitude, to a maximum of 180 degrees East or West of Greenwich. So if at local noon, the chronometer shows 6:00 p.m. in Greenwich, we are 6 hours times 15 degrees west of Greenwich; that is, we are at $(6 \times 15 =)$ 90 degrees West longitude - a line one-quarter of the way around the world from Greenwich, is just west of Fort William on a map of the earth.

NAVIGATION

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate, by successfully completing the written and group assignments, a working knowledge of the history of the magnetic compass and its use. The students will demonstrate, through class discussion, consideration of the role of various cultures (Native and European) in the exploration of Canada; thereby identifying and describing “the contributions to the development of Ontario and Canada of diverse groups at various times in history.” (Common Curriculum) Students, by successfully completing the group assignment, will show communication and teamwork skills. Students will “work willingly alone or with others, as required by the project.” (Common Curriculum)

TIMELINE: Discussion and assignment: Two 70-minute periods.

PREPARATION:

This lesson requires a compass for every two students. The teacher should also ensure that the school hallways or playground will be available for use during the lesson without disturbing other classes. The teacher must also have slips of paper with various locations on the school grounds on them. Ideally, there will be as many locations as there are students, but with a large class, some overlap is to be expected.

For the supplementary exercise lengths of straw, pins or needles, a strong magnet and bowls of water will be required.

EVALUATION: The marks for this lesson should be broken down as follows:

Question sheet: 20 marks

Group assignment: 10 marks

Additional marks may be assigned for participation in class discussion or in the form of peer evaluations incorporated into the group assignment.

INTRODUCTION:

Have the students view the material on navigation. Using the following questions as a guideline, promote a class discussion of some of the related issues.

How does a magnetic compass work?

What problems were associated with early compasses?

How did Canadian explorers use compasses?

What was the major problem David Thompson had with his compass?

What is a sextant?

What is a chronometer?

DEVELOPMENT: Distribute the accompanying question sheet and allow the students time to complete it. Take up and discuss their answers.

GROUP ASSIGNMENT: Each student will be given a slip of paper naming a location on the school grounds. In small groups, preferably pairs, the students will assume the role of either the

explorer or the guide. The guide must show the explorer a route from the classroom to the specified location. The guide does not tell the explorer the destination. The explorer must, using a compass, keep a detailed record of the route, marking direction and distance (in paces). Once the pair has reached the first location, the roles are reversed and the new guide takes the new explorer from their present location to that indicated on his/her slip of paper. To indicate the sort of detail required, show the class the included excerpt from Alexander Mackenzie's journal. Once this exercise has been completed the students will each write a journal entry detailing their experiences as both guide and explorer. They must include their route, any problems encountered along the way and any frustrations with the process or instrument.

JOURNAL EXCERPT FOR GROUP ASSIGNMENT

From the journal of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. June 1793:

Our course was this day, South-South-East one mile, South-South-West half a mile, South-East three quarters of a mile, North-East by East three quarters of a mile, South-East half a mile, South-East by South one mile, South-South-East one mile three quarters, South-East by South half a mile, East by South a quarter of a mile, South-East three quarters of a mile North-East by East half a mile, East by North a quarter of a mile, South-East half a mile, South-East by South a quarter of a mile, South-East by East half a mile, North-East by East half a mile, North-North-East three quarters of a mile, to South by East one mile and an half.

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY

Should time and interest permit, it is possible to have the students make their own compasses by putting a magnetised needle or pin through a straw and floating it in water. The readings of these compasses can be compared to the commercial compasses used for the group assignment.

QUESTION SHEET

1. Briefly describe the development of the magnetic compass from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. (5 marks)
2. What solutions to early navigational problems were attempted? (3 marks)
3. Where were the two compasses carried by Columbus made? (2 marks)
4. In your opinion, did early Canadian explorers receive too much credit for merely recording established Native routes, or did they earn their status in Canadian history? Explain and defend your answer. (10 marks)

NATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN THE FUR TRADE

The contact between European traders and the Native people of Canada resulted in an exchange of many things; not only furs and trade goods, but also ideas, cultures, philosophies, and technology. Having inhabited North America for thousands of years before the Europeans arrived, the Natives had developed the knowledge and skills necessary to live in the harsh interior of the continent. The European traders were eager to learn these techniques in order to survive the harsh climates and terrain of North America, and to make their lives more comfortable and profitable in the New World. The Europeans offered their manufactured goods: muskets, iron tools, knives, copper and cast-iron pots, and cloth. However, in many cases, the flow of *ideas* was from Native to European. This is only logical - the Europeans were the newcomers in this strange and brutal land; they depended on the Native people for their very survival.

The Native technology remarked upon, and in some cases, adopted by the European traders and explorers falls into various categories: transportation; fishing, hunting and trapping; clothing; domestic articles; shelter or dwelling construction; and medicine. Living alongside the various Native tribes, Europeans often marveled at the relative simplicity of Native technology as compared to their own, but also at its ingenuity, inventiveness and practicality.

Transportation

Perhaps the most important aspect of Native technology, as far as fur traders and explorers were concerned, was transportation. The usual methods of European transport -- large wooden boats, horses and carriages, -- were impossible to use in the savage and merciless Canadian landscapes. The many rivers and lakes in all parts of Canada acted as roadways to the Natives, and so most tribes had some form of canoe. The Pacific Coast, and British Columbia Plateau tribes built dugout canoes: the trunk of a red cedar or cottonwood tree hollowed out and flattened on the bottom, and then shaped at the ends to form the shape of a boat. This type of canoe could be as long as 15 meters (50 feet). The Plains, Subarctic and eastern Woodland tribes built canoes of white pine, birch or spruce bark.

Birch Bark Canoe

Birch bark canoes were ideal for inland travel -- they were light and maneuverable, perfect for ponds, lakes, shallow streams and swift rivers -- but birch trees were only plentiful in the Woodland regions. The removal of large sheets of bark from the birch tree, when done in early summer, did not threaten the life of the tree, and ensured optimum thickness and quality of the bark. For an average-sized birch bark canoe, one would need the bark from eight to twelve trees. The frames, ribs and sheeting for these canoes were made of cedar, which first had to be soaked and bent. The joints were sewn together with spruce or white pine roots, which were picked, split and boiled by the women of the tribe. Seams were waterproofed with pitch: a mixture of pine or spruce resin, animal fat and charcoal. The birch bark canoe was the main form of inland transport used by the fur traders. (For more details on canoe construction, refer to the Lesson in Unit 2 entitled "Technology and Society".)

The Travois

The Plains tribes, who were very mobile as a people, relied on a form of land transport as well: the *travois*. This consisted of two long poles lashed to the sides of a dog or horse, dragging a framework carrying household baggage and the *tipi* cover. The frame could either be circular (typical of the Assiniboine tribes) or rectangular (typical of the Blackfoot tribes), and was webbed with willow or *babiche* (tough, untanned animal hide).

Winter Transportation

Since much of Canada is covered in snow for at least half of the year, winter transport was important to Natives especially, but also to European traders and explorers. Most tribes used some type of sled, which would be pulled by humans or dogs. One kind of sled, the *toboggan*, was an invention of the Subarctic and Woodland tribes. It was built of two thin boards of birch wood, bent while wet and then lashed into position. The *toboggan* was light, graceful and fast-moving, especially in light, powdery snow. *Toboggans* could be dragged easily by dogs or humans, depending upon the customs of the various tribes; in Chipewyan tribes, for example, this responsibility fell exclusively upon the women.

Snowshoe

The most important form of winter transport was the snowshoe. Without this Native invention, simply walking through the snow would have been impossible for the inhabitants of early Canada. Snowshoes were used mainly by tribes living in snowy areas: the Plateau, Subarctic and Woodland tribes. While they varied in design, the concept was basic: a wooden frame, usually of durable and flexible ash wood; with interlaced webbing of deer, moose or caribou hide. The physics behind this design is simple weight distribution: the weight of the person wearing the snowshoes is dispersed over a greater area, and thus puts less pressure or “stress” on the surface of the snow. This person’s legs, then, do not sink deep into the snow. The lacing of the snowshoe was done with rawhide or *babiche*, from which the hair was removed by a long soaking period. Snowshoes were laced more tightly and heavily at the centre, for more effective weight suspension. The *moccasin* was the ideal footwear for snowshoeing, due to its soft, flexible sole.

The snowshoe represented more than a mode of transportation for most Native tribes. They were also used in sport, such as racing or winter *lacrosse*. They also took on a ceremonial role at times: for example, the Ojibwa celebrated the first snowfall of every year with a vibrant snowshoe dance.

Hunting and Fishing

Another important aspect of Native technology was in the fields of hunting, trapping and fishing. Native skill was invaluable to the Europeans, who depended on it, not only for trapping fur-bearing animals, but also for putting food on the table. For hunting, most tribes made use of the bow and arrow, and snares made from rawhide or twine made from the stinging nettle plant.

The Subarctic and especially the Plains tribes were the great buffalo-hunters; they used bows and arrows to actually kill the animals, but employed other techniques to trap the herd. For example, the Plains tribes used “pounds” or strongly built corrals, into which they drove the herd by use of animal-skin disguises, and later, horses. Once they were herded into these pounds, the buffalo had nowhere to run, and were defenseless. Another tactic was to drive the herds right off a cliff, and then shoot the injured buffalo or caribou.

In the Coastal, Plateau and Woodland regions, where lakes, rivers and the sea provided the bulk of the food, the Natives developed advanced fishing technology. They constructed nets of twine and rawhide, hooks of bone, spears and harpoons of wood and stone or metal, and clubs of wood. The Coastal tribes constructed weirs; a sort of tidal trap consisting of a series of stakes stuck upright in the sand, which would eventually trap fish as the tide went out.

Domestic Life

Introduction

The women of most tribes were expert at making baskets, storage containers and cooking vessels of all sizes and shapes. The women of the Coastal tribes made containers, baskets and floor mats from cedar bark and roots, or rushes. Plains and Subarctic women preferred to make their baskets and cooking vessels from rawhide, though the Subarctic women also made baskets of birch bark and spruce root. The Plateau Native women made most of their containers of woven grass. The women of the Woodland tribes used the birch bark, which was so plentiful throughout the interior of the continent, to make birch bark containers, or *makuks*. They constructed intricate and beautiful *makuks* for gathering, storage and cooking. As with the construction of canoes, birch bark was an ideal material; it was water-proof, resilient, and easy to bend when freshly picked, and pitch could be used to seal the seams and make the container watertight. Women used *makuks* to boil water, by placing heated rocks on the bottom. The *makuk* was also useful for drying berries, as it could be made very shallow. The Woodland women also made containers of spruce root, the same material with which they stitched the seams of their *makuks*.

Warm Clothing

The tribes of the Subarctic region were naturally concerned with warmth when making their clothing. During the coldest winter months, they wore robes and parkas of rabbit skin. This skin had the warm winter hair of the rabbit still attached, and would be cut into long strips, and then woven together. Woven garments were very effective in keeping body heat in while allowing moisture out. The *moccasins* of these tribes were be lined with rabbit fur or dried grass for extra warmth. The tribes of the Plateau regions, where the average temperature was much warmer, made clothing from woven grass or pounded bark. The Coastal tribes made most of their clothing, when the weather demanded that they wear clothing at all, from the plentiful cedar bark, again cut into long strips and then woven together. This kept them cool in the humid climate, and also kept the ever-present rain off their skin.

Storing and Preserving Food

Native women of the various tribes developed methods of storing and preserving food. Nearly all tribes practiced the technique of smoking meat. A particularly interesting way of doing this was conceived by the Coastal tribes, who used a structure called a smokehouse. This was a two-storey shed made of cedar planks covering a post and beam frame. Fish or other types of meat would be arranged on racks and pegs in the second storey; smoke from low fires would drift upward toward open holes in the roof, circulating around the meat while drying it out and giving it flavour. Sun-drying was a method practiced by almost all tribes: sliced meat, herbs, berries and other fruits would be placed in very shallow containers or on a flat piece of bark and left to dry in the sun for about sixteen hours. In this dehydrated state food could be kept indefinitely.

Once it had been dried, the food had to be stored for future use. There were several different methods of doing this: it could be packed into cloth or skin bags, covered birch bark or woven grass containers, or hung from the “ceilings” of *tipis* or *wigwams*. The Subarctic tribes hung their dried food in racks in trees, or placed it in deep pits in the ground. In the winter, the food buried in pits did not need to be dried; the frozen ground acted as a sort of “refrigerator”.

Pemmican

For the fur trade, the most important example of Native domestic technology involving the storage and preservation of food was the widespread use of *pemmican*. This was a mixture of dried buffalo meat, animal fat and dried berries. Because it was easy to carry and keep, and full of nutrients, *pemmican* became the main food source of the fur trade, and was an important trade good, especially during the long winters in the interior. The Subarctic tribes had a similar mixture, but replaced the buffalo meat with dried fish, which was much more plentiful in their regions.

Home Construction

Every tribe had its own special way of building a home. Each kind of home was suited to both the local weather and the needs of the people and their culture.

The Coastal tribes constructed either huge lodges of a post and beam structure covered with split cedar planks, or large log homes. Both of these dwellings would house several families, and the entrances and corner-beams would be carved into *totems*. All of this was built without the use of nails or iron hammers.

The Plateau tribes had three main types of dwelling. First, there was the semi-underground pit house, which consisted of a circular dug-out pit protected by a conical roof of poles covered with brush and earth. They would sometimes dig tunnels to connect a number of these homes. Then there was the tulemat lodge; a sort of shed-like structure covered with bark or mats of tule and grass, banked around its base with earth and snow. Finally, there was the *tipi*, a dwelling common to many of the regions. In the Plateau regions, these were generally conical pole structures covered with some sort of hide.

In the Plains, they were almost always covered with buffalo hide. *Tipis* were popular with the more mobile tribes of the Plains and Subarctic, because they were easy to take apart and light to carry. The point where the poles met at the top of the structure was left uncovered to let smoke escape. It usually took about eight to ten buffalo hides to cover an average-sized *tipi*. The Subarctic tribes covered their *tipis* with fur and hides in the winter, and then changed this covering to bark in the summer.

The Subarctic tribes built other types of home structures as well; in the summer, for instance, they would construct temporary double lean-tos covered with hide or brush. Some tribes lived in conical log structures chinked with moss and covered with earth and snow. Others constructed circular or rectangular pit houses similar to those of the Plateau tribes.

The dwellings of the Woodland Natives were almost exclusively made of birch bark, although there were two distinctive shapes: a conical or the dome-shaped *wigwam*. These were made small and housed only one family each. There would be a fire pit in the centre, surrounded by buffalo or deer hides on the floor for sleeping on, or simply to keep heat from escaping into the cold ground; these structures were often chinked with moss, clay or earth to keep heat in as much as possible.

Medicine

Introduction

Native medicine was steeped in ritual, religion and magic; it also made use of medicinal herbs and physical treatments, and European traders benefited more than once from the Native *shamans* or healers, who had the ability to cure their respiratory or gastronomic ills, as well as relieve most types of pain. Native medicine, at the time of the Fur Trade was often more effective than European medicine. The bark of the willow tree, for example, was used to treat headache pain, and was effective because it contained ASA – the component of aspirin that alleviates pain. By contrast, the European treatment for a headache would likely include bleeding – extracting a quantity of blood from the patient.

Disease

The European traders made use of the various plant remedies practiced by the Natives. In the early days of exploration, a disease known as *scurvy* (a serious vitamin-C deficiency) took a heavy toll on the inexperienced Europeans. The Native people shared their remedy: berries, or a tea made from the twigs and bark of the white spruce or hemlock trees. Plant remedies could be administered in the form of tea, by chewing or swallowing, by inhaling as a vapor, or even by pouring into the ear. Minor problems such as wounds, sores, stomach disorders, coughs, colds, fevers and rheumatism could be cured or at least relieved by Native methods. The ritualistic side of Native medicine -- for example the use of spiny or thorny plants to “scare” off death -- was also valuable in its own way; it helped to boost the spirit and outlook of the patient, and cured any psychosomatic symptoms or illnesses. Sadly, however, both the faith in Native medicine and the prestige of the *shaman* began to break down considerably after European contact brought fatal and highly contagious diseases, such as smallpox, to the Native population.

Sweat lodge

The physical aspects of Native medicine were also effective, especially the use of the sweat lodge, which was common to nearly all tribes. There were two main types of sweat lodge; the first offered direct exposure to the heat of the fire within the confines of a small, semi-underground structure. The second type was very similar to the Finnish *sauna* or steambath: heated rocks would be placed on the floor of a small, domed, ground-level structure; occupants of the sweat lodge would then pour water over these stones to produce steam. The sweat lodge combined the two aspects of Native medicine, the magical and the practical, into a perfect harmony. Sweating and inhaling vapor was obviously beneficial to one's health : it re-hydrated the body, aided respiration and rid the body of toxins. However, it was also in the sweat lodge that visions were seen, giving answers to important questions in the form of dreams.

NATIVE TECHNOLOGY

OUTCOMES:

Students will consider the impact of Native technology on the fur trade. Students will exercise judgement, oral and visual communication skills and independent learning as part of their group project.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and preparation: two 70-minute periods. Presentation time as required.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material. Assembling of additional resources (library books, video and audio tapes, community resources etc.) for group projects where possible.

EVALUATION:

Group project marks:

Content (15 marks)

Creativity (5 marks)

Clarity of Expression and Visuals (5 marks)

Participation - Peer Evaluation (5 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Develop with the class a working definition of what constitutes technology. Ensure that this definition will cover the aspects of Native technology to be covered here. A sample definition from the Heritage Illustrated dictionary reads as follows: *The body of knowledge available to a civilization that is of use in fashioning implements, practicing manual arts and skills, and extracting or collecting materials.*

Have the students view the provided material.

DISCUSSION:

Compile a list of the Native inventions used extensively in the fur trade. Highlight those that the students deem the three most important and have them justify these choices.

EXERCISE:

In groups of 2-5, have the students prepare an oral presentation with a visual component on one of the following:

Compare the necessity of Native technology for European Fur traders to the necessity of European technology for Natives. Use examples to support and defend your claims.

Compare Native medicine to present-day trends in medicine.

Make a list of the equipment you would take into the interior of Canada if you were an eighteenth-century fur trader. Justify your choices and note how much of your equipment is Native in origin and how much is European. Explain the predominance of one or the other.

Select one aspect of Native technology to research. Prepare a brief lesson on this subject and share it with the class. Keep in mind that this should be an in-depth look at the topic, revealing information that has not already been discussed in class.

HAT-MAKING (PEOPLE AREN'T WEARING ENOUGH HATS!)

On average, the North West Company handled about 100 000 lbs. of beaver annually. This makes up roughly half the total weight of pelts acquired in a trading year. Why was this bark-chewing member of Order *Rodentia* so highly sought after by 19th century fur traders? Why not a greater interest in luxury furs such as arctic fox or mink? The answer is - hats, hats, hats! The backbreaking labour over hundreds of portages and thousands of kilometres of canoe routes, the vicious and sometimes bloody competition, the huge costs of building large fur-trade posts such as Fort William, the mad hatters with their nerves destroyed, the Native people dying of smallpox -- all this toil and trouble took place so that European gentlemen, as well as women and children, could wear fashionable hats. Gentlemen wore top hats, ladies wore beaver bonnets, and children wore smaller versions of the same. But it was the gentleman's top hat that was the driving force behind the fur trade. And the styles were constantly changing, which helped to keep up the demand for beaver fur from Canada.

Europeans have been wearing felted hats since the fourteenth century. *Felt* is made of matted wool or hair in which the fibres become interlocked. The quest for a material that could produce a waterproof, durable and elegant hat ended when Europeans discovered the soft under-wool of the beaver. Sheep's wool could be easily felted, but it did not hold up well to wear and tear. The barbed hairs of the beaver, and to a lesser extent of the muskrat and rabbit, superseded all other fibres to such a degree that by the sixteenth century the beaver population of Europe and Russia had become drastically depleted.

Fortunately for hat connoisseurs, but quite unfortunately for beavers, the pelt of the *Castor Canadensis* (North American beaver) could be acquired from the native inhabitants of North America at little cost. The journey which the beaver made from the Canadian wilderness to a gentleman's head was a complicated process.

The Beaver

Weighing between 40 and 50 pounds, Canada's national animal is one of the largest rodents in the world. Some notable features of the beaver are small muscles in its nostrils and ears, which when constricted, can keep out water, and the fur-covered lips which possess the ability to close in behind its front teeth in order to allow it to chew or cut branches under water.

The most important feature to a fur trader though, is the thick covering of fur all over the beaver's body, except of course on the tail, which has short bristles sticking up around smooth scales. The beaver has two types of fur serving two different functions. The outer, longer *guard hairs* receive oil from glands and act as a waterproof coat. Underneath this coat lies a shorter thicker layer of wool or under-fur, which keeps the cold out and the animal's body temperature in.

It was the beaver's under-fur that was most desired by fur traders and hat-makers, for this was the material which could be felted into a luxurious and fashionable hat. The fur traders judged the quality of beaver pelts according to the colour and thickness of the under-fur, classifying them as either "common" (lower quality) or "prime" (higher quality). But before the fur trader could assess a pelt's quality, the animal had to be trapped by Native hunters, skinned,

stretched, and traded, and this was only the beginning of its long journey to the top of somebody's head.

Trapping

The fur trade in Canada would not have been a success were it not for the Native hunters who actually acquired the pelts. Traditional methods of hunting involved the use of rawhide snares, copper or stone spears and arrowheads, nets, and deadfall traps. The introduction of the European musket, the iron leg-hold trap, and the muskrat spear made the killing of game swifter and easier. Finding the game was still time-consuming and difficult despite these modern conveniences, but this didn't prevent massive over-trapping. The North American beaver was almost extinct by the end of the nineteenth century.

Winter was the best season to trap beaver and muskrat. In winter, the animals had the thickest amount of insulating wool (the prized fiber which made the best hat); also, it was easy to walk on snowshoes out to a beaver lodge on a frozen lake. Hunters would cut several holes in the ice around the lodge and set a series of nets. Once the nets were in place someone in the party would begin to tear the lodge apart, forcing the beavers out to their impending doom. During the summer beaver could be caught by setting traps along their trails, the nearer the water the better, baited with poplar twigs or castoreum - the dried perineal glands of the beaver.

Castoreum on its own constituted a minor trade item. Smaller than a clenched human fist, these scent glands are located behind the beaver's hind legs served a variety of purposes for those who extracted them. Besides its practical use as bait, castoreum was also used in perfumes, and medicines which were thought to cure everything from headaches to liver tumors. In 1800, 5535 pounds of the stuff was exported to England alone.

Skinning

Once the beaver had been caught and killed it then had to be skinned, a task most often accomplished by the women of the tribe. First the feet and tail were cut off. Next, a long cut was made from the lower belly to the bottom lip of the animal. The hide was then cut away from the body and washed to remove dirt and blood. After this, excess flesh and fat were scraped off and the whole pelt was sewn to a willow or ash hoop.

By sewing the hide to a stretcher the skin was allowed to dry or be cured without curling. Curing involved rubbing the brains or bone marrow of the beaver into the skin, or the hide could be smoked over a small fire rendering it dark brown and soft. At this point, the fur could be brought to a fur trader and traded for European goods: iron tools, knives, blankets, guns, jewelry, or some other product of Europe's workshops.

Fur Pressing

Before the furs could be shipped, they had to be pressed into a form which could be carried easily over portages and stowed away in canoes; the people of the fur trade finally settled

on a 90-pound (40 kg) pack containing about sixty beaver pelts. To keep out water, deer skins were placed on the top and bottom of each pack, and the whole pack was *pressed* - a large lever was used to squash the furs into the form of a rectangle, and either tied tight or sewn up in a white canvas called Russia sheeting.

Transport

Once it had been packed, the fur was shipped from the place where it had been traded. A fur traded to the North West Company was normally shipped by canoe to Fort William, which could have meant a tortuous canoe trip of up to 4,000 km (2,400 miles). At Fort William, the pelt was cleaned, sorted for quality, accounted for, repacked, and shipped off to Montreal by canoe, or by schooner. At Montreal, the fur was placed on board ocean-going ships and transported to England.

Hat-making

Once the fur was shipped to England, it was sold at auction to the highest bidder. At this point, the hatters took control of the process.

To prepare the fur for felting, the guard hairs (outer layer of fur) had to be removed. The pelt was placed on the hatter's knee and he would pull out the guard hairs with a long knife or large tweezers, leaving only the beaver wool on the skin. A solution of nitrate of mercury would then be brushed on the pelt, to roughen the remaining fibres and increase the wool's matting properties. The wool was then shaved from the pelt with the knife.

If this sort of treatment seems unfortunate for our inoffensive friend the beaver, it was equally so for the hatter. Long periods of exposure to the mercury would eventually cause major problems with the hatter's central nervous system, affecting first the eyelids, then the fingers, tongue, arms and legs, sense of balance, and then finally the mental condition of the hatter - thus the expression "mad as a hatter."

Once the wool was shaved from the pelt, it was called "fluff." The fluff was carded, or pulled apart, so that it was ready for the rest of the felting process. At this point, the fluff for the hat was weighed out according to the intended size and thickness of the hat. This would usually amount to the amount of fluff that came from one beaver pelt - between 8 and 12 ounces.

The fluff was placed on a square table with evenly spaced parallel slots. Over the table, a bow like a violin bow was suspended. The string of the bow was plucked, causing it to vibrate; the fluff underneath also started to vibrate. This vibration caused dust and dirt to fall out of the fluff and through the slots in the table. Also, the fluff began to spread out on the table and mat together to form a loose felt. Once this loose felt began to form, the hatter pressed down on the felt with a hatter's basket to mat the fibers more closely together. At this point, the pile of fluff had been turned into a large oval sheet about four feet (1.3m) long, three feet (1m) wide and six to twelve inches (15-30 cm) high. This sheet was worked into a triangular form called a *gore*. Two gores were combined into a cone shape, with a bit more fluff added for the brim.

This cone-shaped “hat” was dipped into a mixture of sulfuric acid, beer-grounds, and wine sediments, taken out, and worked over a cone with a rolling pin until it was about half of its original size. It was then forced tightly over a wooden block to give it the basic shape and size of the finished top hat, after which the brim was cut with a knife. The hat was dyed in a large copper vat - top hats could be almost any colour, depending on the dictates of the fashion at the time. The hat was also dipped into a glue-like solution to stiffen and waterproof it, and then the finishing touches were performed. The hat was given a satin lining, ribbon was applied to the brim, the maker’s trademark was placed on the hatband - and the hat was ready for sale.

HAT-MAKING

OUTCOMES:

Students will demonstrate an awareness of the journey of a beaver fur on its way to becoming a hat, and be able to list the people involved in the fur-collecting, transportation, and manufacturing process of a beaver-felt top hat.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and preparation: 70 minutes

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

Group project marks:

Content (15 marks)

Creativity (5 marks)

Clarity of Expression and Visuals (5 marks)

Participation - Peer Evaluation (5 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Briefly present an overview of the journey of a hat from North America's northern forests to the markets of Europe, outlining along the way the roles of all of the people involved: Native trappers, Native women to prepare the pelts, European fur traders to trade goods for the fur, French Canadian voyageurs to transport the fur packs, English sailors to take the fur to England, the fur auctioneers, the hat-maker, and the gentleman who was the final consumer of the hat.

Have the students view the provided material.

DISCUSSION:

Compile a list of all the people involved in the trapping, transportation, manufacture, and sale of a hat. Emphasize the large distances involved, and the huge expense involved in paying the voyageurs, constructing posts, purchasing trade goods, etc.

EXERCISE:

Assign further reading to the students. In groups of 2-5, have the students prepare an oral presentation with a visual component on one of the following:

The beaver

European trade goods

Native trapping and fur preparation process

The voyageurs

European fur traders

European craftspeople (such as hat-makers)

Upper-class European society (the final consumers of the hats)

SOCIAL HISTORY OF NEW FRANCE

The Arrival of the French

France first became interested in North America in the early sixteenth century. As early as the 1520's, expeditions of French Basque, Norman and Breton fishermen crossed the ocean to fish off the Grand Banks or in the Strait of Belle Isle. The men salted or dried the fish on shore, and made contact with the Natives of the area. The Natives traded a small number of pelts with these fishermen.

The first French explorer in North America was Jacques Cartier. Cartier was asked by the King of France to find a passage to the Orient. Beginning in 1534, Cartier made three voyages across the Atlantic Ocean and into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. He landed at Stadacona and Hochelaga and interacted with the Natives living in these places. In 1541 he attempted to start a French colony at Charlesbourg-Royal (near present-day Quebec), but a difficult winter caused the colonists to return to France in the spring.

French settlement along the Saint Lawrence River was attempted at Tadoussac, in 1600, but the men barely survived the first winter. Samuel de Champlain, considered the founder of New France, was convinced that a settlement at Quebec (or Stadacona) would be successful. He and twenty-five men built the first habitation or fortress at Quebec in 1608. In order to survive in New France, Champlain made alliances with the Huron and Algonkin. These people traded with the French and taught them the skills necessary to live in North America. Slowly the French and Natives learned each other's languages. Men like Étienne Brulé and Jean Nicollet de Belleborne lived with the Huron, Algonkin and Nippissing and came to know their languages and lifestyles.

Champlain received the money he needed to support the colony from commercial companies and the king of France. In exchange, he was responsible for encouraging the settlers to trade for fur with Huron and Algonkin allies. Champlain also used the money that he acquired from his wife's dowry to finance the settlement of New France. He married Hélène Boullé, from a wealthy French family, when she was twelve. When she was twenty-two, Hélène joined her husband in New France and remained there for only four years.

Gradually companies were started in New France to administer fur trade. The Compagnie des Cent-Associés was formed in 1627. It was followed by the Communauté des Habitants. The companies were responsible for the fur trade, as well as immigration and the administration of New France, but they were not very successful. For example, in return for receiving a monopoly to the fur trade in New France, the Compagnie des Cent-Associés was responsible for bringing 4000 French settlers to the area. Despite their efforts, in 1663 the population of the colony was only 3 000, and almost half of the population had been born in New France.

Many of the settlers that were in New France recognised the profit to be gained from the fur trade. As a result, a large number of French men entered the trade. More than half of the colonists obtained their income in this manner. If trading was successful, these men

made a good deal of money. However, when the French demand for furs decreased, it caused many problems in New France. The colony suffered economic depression and debt. New France was also negatively affected when many traders left to travel in the West. Men who could have been working in the colony were gone which led to further financial problems and slow population growth.

The settlers, government in New France and their Native allies had further concerns. When Champlain formed alliances with the Huron, Montagnais and Algonkin, he angered the Iroquois. The Iroquois were enemies of the Huron, and the fur trade deepened this hostility. As active traders with the Dutch and English, the Iroquois had trapped most of the animals in their territory. Thus, they moved north into Huron areas to acquire fur there. The Iroquois attacked Huron settlements, and made raids on French settlements along the Saint Lawrence.

The Huron were further harmed by epidemic. By 1640, it is estimated that half to two-thirds of the Huron and Montagnais population were killed by European diseases such as small pox and measles. Additionally, disease killed more elderly people than any other group. As a result, much of the traditional knowledge and political experience of the Huron and Montagnais was lost at a time when this experience was most needed.

Expansion

The French were determined to make New France a successful colony and establish a strong French presence in North America. In 1663, the king of France, Louis XIV, took control of New France and made it a royal province. The colony was no longer administered by fur trading companies, but by representatives of the King. The man with the most power in New France was the governor who was responsible for external relations, law and order. He also dealt with all military affairs. The intendant was a second representative of the King in New France. His responsibilities included finance, economic development and justice.

King Louis XIV took action to end the problems caused by the Iroquois. In 1666, a force of 1 200 French soldiers arrived in New France. These soldiers attacked and burned four main villages of the Mohawk, an Iroquois tribe. The French suffered many casualties, but the show of force did have an effect as the Iroquois agreed to peace with the French in 1667.

The King also took measures to increase the population of New France. Men outnumbered the women in the small colony six to one, and in some cases eight to one. To start new young families that would offer stability and citizens to New France, King Louis XIV arranged for women to immigrate. Approximately 800 women, called *filles du roi* or daughters of the king, arrived in New France from 1663 to 1673. The women ranged in age from 12 to 25. About 30% of the *filles du roi* came from the *Hôpital-Général* in Paris, a home for orphans and abandoned children. Some were women of the nobility or bourgeois class of French society. Others were women whose parents could not find husbands for them. When the *filles du roi* arrived in New France they quickly

married, often within a few months. This did not give them much time to decide on the man to marry, but most smart women chose a man who had already built a home. All men were encouraged to marry. A fur trader could even lose his licence to trade if he did not have a wife!

During this period, the King also sent several hundred *engagés*, or workmen, to New France. These men served a three-year contract to a farmer or tradesman, and then were free to return to France. However, more than half of them chose to stay in New France after their contract ended. As well approximately 400 of the French soldiers sent to fight the Iroquois remained in the colony.

Society of New France

The population of New France slowly increased, and agriculture became very important. By the eighteenth century, *les habitants*, or farmers were the most numerous group in New France and lived along the banks of the Saint Lawrence River. The Saint Lawrence was the main “road” through the colony. The farms were long and narrow pieces of land that stretched back from the river. This type of arrangement, called the seigneurial system, was how land was divided in France. Land was granted to a seigneur who arranged for *censitaires*, or independent farmers, to farm the property. The *censitaires*, who preferred to call themselves *habitants*, did a certain amount of work for the seigneur each year for use of the land.

Most *habitants* lived much better than farmers in France. In New France, the farmers did not have to pay taxes. Also, they generally had a better diet than the French farmers. Fresh game, fruit, fish, grains and vegetables were available, and *habitants* purchased small luxuries such as coffee and tea. Unlike the French farmers, who were called peasants, the farmers in New France were well known for their independence.

New France had over two thousand tradesmen by the mid-eighteenth century. These were mostly carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, navigators, bakers and butchers. They worked out of small shops attached to their homes and owned their own tools. Many of the tradesmen were successful because of the high demand for their skills.

There was also a growing class of merchants in urban areas. They imported French cloth, wines, guns, lead, utensils, salt and a variety of other goods for the citizens of New France to purchase. Some of these merchants became quite wealthy and successful. The upper class of the society in New France was composed of people who were known as the *noblesse* or nobility. The nobility in New France were officers in the military, or were involved in the government of the colony. Some were even involved in the fur trade.

The Church in New France

The Roman Catholic Church was very important to society in New France. Members of the Jesuit order had first arrived in New France in 1625, and built missions that were

dedicated to converting Natives to Christianity. The Jesuits also provided religious services to the small number of settlers and traders. They started schools in New France to teach the sons of settlers to read and write. Ursuline nuns were the first female order that arrived in 1639, to teach the girls of the colony. Further nuns came to New France and started hospitals and charity organizations.

As the population of New France increased, the priests and nuns had much to do in the growing colony. The Catholic Church was responsible for maintaining schools, hospitals, caring for the orphans, elderly and those with disabilities. As well, the priests celebrated masses, performed marriages and funerals, and registered births and deaths. They were considered the leaders in their communities. Priests and nuns also continued to work with the Natives that lived in and around New France.

The Women of New France

Women played essential roles in the daily life of New France. Many of the women who emigrated from France came from the northwestern part of the country or from around Paris. Women from these areas were generally educated and involved in the business affairs of their communities. Knowledge of reading, writing and trade were important skills that helped the women when they travelled across the ocean to start a new way of life in New France. Some immigrants were married or were daughters who came with their families, but the majority of women who immigrated to New France were single.

Women had many responsibilities in New France. They cared for children, tended gardens, took care of animals, wove and spun cloth, and sewed clothing for the family. These were some of the tasks no doubt done by Marie Hébert, the first French woman to settle in New France. Women were also willing and able to defend their homes. When she was 14, Madeleine de Verchéres saved her life and the lives of the people living on her family seigneurie from Iroquois attack.

The women of New France, unlike in Europe, were allowed to own property. Madeleine de Roybon d'Allonne, a *filles du roi* who never married, owned a large seigneurie. She also debated with the government of New France to allow the settlers of New France to trade fur freely.

Married women, whose husbands travelled to trade for fur with the Natives, took over the family business or farm. Marie-Anne Barbel ran her husband's affairs while he traded and explored. When he died, she took control of his fur trading business. Some women were active fur traders, and were involved with everything from trading goods with the Natives to shipping pelts to France.

Another significant group of women who came to New France was Roman Catholic nuns. Nuns arrived in New France starting early in the 1600's. Women like Marie d'Incarntion came to the colony to teach reading, writing and domestic skills to Native girls in Quebec. In Montreal in 1663 there was no school available for boys, but the nuns provided an education to girls in the city. One traveller remarked that women "in general

receive more education than the men.”¹ Other nuns, led by Marguerite Bourgeoys, travelled to rural areas to teach girls. Nuns also provided nursing care for the colonists of New France. Jeanne Mance arrived and set up the *Hôtel-Dieu*, a hospital in Montreal, and spent many years treating the sick and injured.

The Fur Trade in New France

After 1663 King Louis XIV attempted to take firm control of the fur trade. French authorities feared that more and more men would be drawn into the fur trade and away from farming. The French believed that a strong agricultural settlement would make New France permanent and independent. Thus, to limit the fur trade, traders were required to have licences. Every year about five hundred men were given permission to enter the fur trade. Countless others, such as Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, traded without permission.

There were also recognised benefits to the fur trade. When the men travelled into the interior they developed relationships with the Natives. This maintained French and Native alliances. French traders also established fur trading posts in the West. These men were the first Europeans to travel in the Great Lakes, and in areas that today make up the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Men like Pierre La Vérendrye and his sons travelled and traded on Lake Winnipeg. Such men established a French presence in the interior. Thus, by the 1740's the fur trade in New France was recognised as both respectable and essential.

New France

Outcomes:

Students will develop an appreciation of the personality traits and/or skills of successful pioneers - both commercially and personally - of New France. Through personal evaluation and group discussion, students will compare and contrast their characters to those that they are studying, hypothesising how they may have fared if they had been living in 17th Century Canada.

Timeline:

Background study of biographical information:	30 minutes.
Completion of individual written evaluation exercises:	30 minutes.
Group or classroom discussion as required.	

Preparation:

¹ *Memoires de Pierre de Sales Laterreire et de ses traverses* (Quebec, 1873), 52-53 as found in Mason Wade, *The French Canadians 1760-1945* (Toronto: MacMillian Company of Canada, 1955), 77.

Familiarisation with generic themes of settlement of New France, as well as some biographical details of political, religious, mercantile, exploratory, and more commonplace figures of 17th Century Canadian society.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated qualitatively, based on their ability to critically assess the attributes of those studied, as well as draw comparisons and/or contrasts to themselves.

Introduction:

Students should review generic information pertaining to the settlement of New France, as well as perusing the biographies of New France specifically provided in *Northwest to the Pacific*.

Discussion:

The following questions should be asked and answered by students individually, or in the context of small group discussion, which may be developed into an all-class venue.

- What do most explorers have in common with each other? Most *Filles du Roi*? Fur traders?
- Which of these groups is wealthier? More active in their work? Contributes more to their society?
- Of the early people of New France, which one are you most similar to? Most different from?
- Specifically, how are you similar and/or different from these early pioneers of Canada?
- Given the chance, which person you've studied would you want to have been? Why?
- If you lived in New France as you, how would you have made your living?
- Do you think you would have been successful? Comfortable?

Encouraging students to research a full range of biographies, as well as discussing the diversity of personal contributions - of both genders - is critically important to developing an understanding of early Canadians. Some responses - specifically about less biographed persons - may be inferred by students rather than based on actual documented fact.

Exercise:

Assign further reading - within texts and on-line - working towards the development of a more extensive biography of a pioneer of New France of each student's choosing.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

Following the British conquest of New France in 1760, the social conditions and population of Canada underwent a period of change. At first, the overwhelming majority of the population were the French Canadians who continued to live as they always had. With the exception of opportunity-seeking merchants from Britain and Albany who began to trade out of Montreal, there was no major movement of English-speakers into Canada.

It was the American Revolution and the emigration of American colonists who remained loyal to the British crown that changed the make-up of British North America's population. The United Empire Loyalists were religious objectors, or staunch royalists; some of them were merely hesitant to support the Revolution. Regardless of the reason for their lack of loyalty to the young United States of America, Loyalists were labeled "Tories" by the Americans and persecuted. Some of them had their houses and property seized and burned, some were physically beaten, some were murdered. Others simply had no desire to live in the United States. British North America was the closest safe haven, and loyalty was rewarded with land grants from the Crown. British soldiers who had fought in the Revolution were given inexpensive land in British North America as well. Thus, the territory inhabited mostly by Natives and French Canadians saw the introduction of those of British descent.

The Loyalists generally settled in one of two regions: the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, or the area known as "Upper Canada" (what is now southern Ontario). They came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and their cultural impact on British North America was extensive. In the Maritimes, educated Loyalists founded the first university in Canada: King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Other classes were also well-represented among the Loyalists: merchants, artisans and farmers all found their way to British North America.

Many of the poorer immigrants settled in Upper Canada. In this region, subsistence agriculture was the most common way of life. Towns were few and far between, and the fur trade had long since moved further west. The farms of Upper Canada were small and self-sufficient. As the land that was granted or sold to settlers at the time was not cleared, a great deal of work was required to make farmland of the wilderness. Often, the plots of land were not even easily accessible: road building was considered the responsibility of the individual farmer and not of the government or land companies.

British Loyalist settlers in Upper Canada and the Maritimes had to make some very hard choices once they crossed the border into Canada. Although merchants in Halifax or Kingston were able to enjoy a certain amount of culture and luxury, most of the Loyalists had no choice other than to become farmers, which meant extremely hard work. Families who had lived relatively comfortable lives in the American colonies found themselves clearing forest for farmland.

The farm demanded a great deal of work from both women and children in order to survive. The term "housekeeping" takes on a new aspect when one considers that it requires hauling water, chopping firewood, making and mending clothes, spinning yarn and cooking with limited provisions over an open hearth. Women planted and weeded gardens, milked cows, churned butter, and made soap and candles. The labour-intensive life fostered a sense of

community and mutual aid in which neighbouring farmers would gather to assist in the raising of houses and barns, and in which help was readily offered to those in need.

Children learned by helping their parents. This method of learning helped to prepare young people for tasks that would be expected of them as adults. Public schools were rare, so that a child's education was gained mostly from his or her parents. It was not unheard of, however, for an educated woman or a church minister to conduct a "homeschool" for neighbouring children.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate factual knowledge of the social history of Upper Canada and the Maritimes by successfully completing the writing assignment. Students will exercise their analytical skills by making comparisons that will require the recollection of previously covered material.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with material.

EVALUATION:

Written Assignment: Content (5 marks)
Expression (3 marks)
Mechanics (2 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Briefly review with the class the material covered in the Social History of New France lesson. The provided material on British North America should then be viewed.

DISCUSSION:

Generate with the class a list of similarities and differences between the social histories of New France and British North America. This list will provide the foundation for the written assignment.

EXERCISE:

The students will complete the following:

Write a brief comparison between the lives of women and children in New France, Upper Canada and the Maritimes.

NORTH AMERICA'S FIRST PEOPLE

Native Tribes of the Canadian Fur Trade

In 1492, when Columbus first set foot in what he and other Europeans considered a “New World,” North America had already been inhabited for about 15,000 years. From the frozen wastes near the Arctic Circle to the steaming jungles of what is now southern Mexico, the continent was home to an amazing variety of societies, each with its own distinct language, culture, and traditions. No one knows for sure how many people lived in North America prior to the arrival of the Europeans; some historians estimate that there were about 2 million people living on the continent, while others claim that there might have been as many as 18 million. One thing which is very clear, though, is that the arrival of Europeans was disastrous for the original inhabitants of the continent. Disease, war, and slavery at the hands of Europeans wiped out most of the people and shattered many of the cultures of pre-Columbian America. By 1900, there were only about 350,000 Native Americans left.

In some ways, the fur trade was less destructive to the various Native peoples of what became Canada than other contacts with Europeans in different parts of the continent. Native-European contact had also produced alliance and trade, which in the early days was often mutually beneficial. The Native peoples accepted and creatively combined new technologies such as muskets, iron tools and horses with their own traditional ways of life, and the first Canadian business flourished. However, the spread of European diseases (smallpox, measles, syphilis, and flu viruses) still killed tens of thousands of people. In many cases, the old people who were the guardians of the ancient stories and tribal history were the first to die because they were weaker than the young people and less able to fight off disease. This meant that the Natives had to do without the advice of their elders when they badly needed it to deal with the new situations brought about by contact with Europeans.

Native culture and social history is a vast area of study, spanning huge distances and huge periods of time. To describe the details of spiritual and cultural life among each tribe living in Canada at the time of the Fur Trade would require hundreds of pages. The most important thing to keep in mind about Native cultures in Canada is that despite the ravages of disease, displacement by Europeans, and the rise of modern technology, many Native cultures continue to survive today, in the face of newer, more modern challenges.

Coastal Tribes

Before the arrival of European traders and settlers, the various coastal tribes lived in an area that stretched from the northern tip of modern day British Columbia to just south of Vancouver Island. They spoke a total of about 20 different languages. Because the Pacific Ocean provided an abundant source of food, they were rarely hungry. This meant that survival was not a constant issue for these tribes, and they were able to develop a rich cultural and artistic life, the best-known examples of which are the breath-taking "totems". They were excellent wood-carvers and carpenters, and very talented painters.

The basic unit of society among the Coastal peoples was a large group of relatives who shared a common ancestor. In the north, this kinship was passed along the female bloodlines, but

in the south, it could be passed on either through the mother's or father's lines. Each kin group was guided by a capable leader or leaders, who protected and managed family members, as well as their possessions and property. The societies of the Coastal peoples also included a slave class, which was mostly made up of prisoners of war taken in battles with enemy tribes, but also included slaves acquired through purchase. These slaves were treated as possessions and could be bought and sold. A slave would generally live with its master and his family, but did not enjoy the basic civil rights of the free people, and was made to perform all sorts of menial tasks.

The division of labour among men and women was not too different from that of other tribes throughout Canada: hunting and fishing was left to the men, while the women gathered berries, nuts and shellfish, and trapped some smaller game. Carpentry and painting was men's work, while women fashioned the baskets, clothing, blankets and mats. Women usually prepared the meals. In battle, men would be depended on to fight, while women stayed in the village to protect home, property and family.

History and legend were passed on mainly through song. Sickness was regarded as a loss of soul, or danger thereof, and a shaman or medicine man was usually called upon to restore the spiritual and physical condition of the sick person.

Plateau Tribes

The "Colombian Plateau" or "Cordillera" is the geographical area between the coastal mountains and the Rocky Mountains. This area goes as far north as the modern-day Yukon Territory, and stretches to the American border in the south. There are three main language groups spoken among these tribes : Salishan, Kootenay and Athapaskan.

Plateau society was a little less structured and more egalitarian than the Coastal society to the west. Life on the Plateau was more difficult than Coastal life: people had to move with each season in order to find enough food to eat. Their houses and villages were therefore less permanent. People tended to travel and live with relatives. Most of the decision-making fell to the men, and there were chiefs who organised certain events and aspects of society. However, the chiefs did not have absolute power, and at gatherings all men had equal opportunity to voice concerns and make decisions. In fact, many of the tougher decisions were passed on to the elders of the societies, who had the respect and admiration of their younger tribesmen due to their life experience. Land was considered, for the most part, communal, with very few exceptions. The main source of food for the Plateau people was the river salmon, which was generally plentiful.

Work was divided between men and women. Men were responsible for fishing, hunting, trapping, manufacturing tools, weapons and implements, and for warfare. Women's duties included gathering, preparing, and storing food, caring for children, harvesting plants and maintaining the home.

The Plateau people had a deep spiritual connection with nature, and nearly all inanimate and animate objects, such as rocks, trees, and animals, were believed to contain special powers. Songs and ceremony were important in Plateau spiritual life, and were used to summon spirits and religious power.

People of the Plains

East of the Rockies lay the terrain of the Plains Indians. This territory ranged from the Rocky Mountains to Eastern Manitoba, and from Texas to a point just north of the Saskatchewan Rivers. There were three main languages spoken in this region: Athapaskan, Algonkian and Siouan. However, differences between the individual languages were so great, and the lifestyles of the Plains tribes proved so nomadic, that a common sign language was developed for purposes of trade and warfare.

Plains peoples had to constantly be on the move in order to survive. Food was not plentiful in any region or season, except for a brief period in the summer when buffalo tended to herd together. At this time, small bands of Plains Indians would meet in larger tribes for a few weeks of ceremony and celebration. For the rest of the year, however, they would travel and live in loosely organised bands. Chiefs were considered advisers rather than rulers, and their position would be secure as long as they continued to succeed in protecting the band and finding food. They made decisions, but these decisions had to be unanimously approved by a council of elders. Plains life was centred mainly around the large herds of buffalo that roamed all parts of the Plains. The buffalo provided the Plains people with food, clothing made from its strong hide, and tools made from its horns, bone and sinew. Buffalo dung could be dried and used as a fuel.

Women gathered plants and berries, but the main source of food on the prairies was the hunting done by the men. As game was not plentiful all year long, women spent large amounts of time preparing food for preservation. The main food of the Plains was buffalo meat, which the women of the tribe would preserve as *pemmican*. David Thompson called *pemmican* a "wholesome, well tasted food." It was made by drying and smoking strips of buffalo meat, pounding the dried meat fine, and mixing this with animal fat and sometimes berries. *Pemmican*, dense, long-lasting, and full of vitamins and nourishment, qualities that were ideally suited not only to the Plains tribes but also to the fur trade. The North West Company bartered for huge amounts of this foodstuff in order to sustain their canoe brigades in the west.

Religious ideas and rituals were a major part of Plains life. Like the other Native American cultures, the people of the Plains believed that animals and other parts of nature possessed great spiritual powers.

The Subarctic

The subarctic area was vast, stretching from the Bering Sea to Hudson's Bay. Most people of this group spoke an Athapaskan language. Language among the Subarctic peoples was very important politically: most people were not organised into tribes, but lived and traveled in small named groups whose members shared a certain area of land and spoke the same language. There were over twenty variations of the Athapaskan language.

Most Subarctic groups did not have chiefs before European contact. Instead, people tended to align themselves with certain individuals manifesting leadership qualities. These "leaders" would organise day-to-day tasks such as hunting preparation, warfare preparation or trading. They did not enjoy total or even considerable authority, however. Subarctic bands valued their personal freedom, which corresponded well to their unique environment. After

European contact, and especially during the fur trade, white fur traders tried to play up the prestige of the "chiefs" of the Subarctic bands, in order to better control the Native people activities near to their forts.

Men and women enjoyed equal freedom in making decisions that affected the band. If a particular individual or family was unhappy with how the band was being run, they were free to leave that band for another, or to be by themselves for a time.

Traditional legends of the Subarctic peoples told of a time when animals had great power and could assume human form. Knowledge and power were one: a powerful person was said "to know". There was much ceremony surrounding the killing of animals, and spiritual ceremonies were performed before and after the hunt.

Woodlands

This large group's territory stretched from west of Lake Winnipeg all the way to the East Coast of Canada. There were two main language groups spoken: Algonkian in the west, and Iroquoian in the east. The Algonkian languages, which included Ojibwa and Cree, were fairly similar to each other, and Natives speaking one Algonkian language could usually speak or understand at least one other.

The Algonkian peoples of the Woodlands grew some crops, but again, hunting and fishing provided the bulk of the food. The largest political organisation was the band-village, usually led by a chief. The chief's position was hereditary through the father's bloodline.

The most important religious personage was the shaman or medicine man, who cured physical and spiritual sickness. He was also in charge of finding game, or performing spiritual rites to attract or appease game. There was no difference between the animal and the human worlds; as far as the Algonkian cultures were concerned, animals had souls just as people did.

NORTH AMERICA'S FIRST PEOPLE

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate factual knowledge of the social, economic, and political forms of the North American Native societies that participated in the fur trade.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: Two 70-minute periods.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with material.

EVALUATION:

Written Assignment: Content (5 marks)
Expression (3 marks)
Mechanics (2 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Briefly review with the class the material covered in the North America's First People lesson.

DISCUSSION:

After covering the bulk of the material in the unit, begin to focus class discussion on the Native people who live in your part of Canada. Encourage the class to think about history not as a series of disconnected events which occurred long ago, but as a process which connects the past directly with the present. If possible, plan an outing to one of the Native reserves in your area, or have a Native speaker come in to talk with the students. This will set the stage for the exercises.

EXERCISE:

The students will complete the following:

Find out which Native tribe lived in your area at the time of contact with Europeans, how the Native people of your area live today. Write a short essay about the conditions of Native people in your area before contact with Europeans, and the ways in which they live today.

CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY circa 1815

The North West Company was organized along class lines, making a distinction between labourers and gentlemen. The labourers carried out most of the physical work, while the gentlemen managed the affairs of the company. In fur trade terms, the labourers paddled and portaged canoes, built and maintained trading posts, and produced items for the trade. The gentlemen were the fur traders and bookkeepers of the concern. Also in fur trade terms, the labourers were called *engagés*, a term that makes reference to the contracts or “engagements” signed by all company engagés. The gentlemen were often called the *bourgeois*, the name given them by their mostly French Canadian engagés.

The distinction between a gentleman and a labourer was based on money and education. The ranks of the engagés in the NWC were filled mainly by farmer’s sons and other uneducated men from around Montreal, where the company did its recruiting. Almost all of these men were French Canadian, or *Canadien*. The ranks of the bourgeois were filled by young educated men, mainly of Anglo-scottish background, either from the Canadas or from Britain. Many bourgeois actively recruited their young relatives into the trade, and so from the early days of the NWC its management had a uniquely Scottish character.

This was the *general* cast of the NWC structure, and exceptions should be noted. There were French Canadians that were bourgeois, and Anglo-scots that were engagé. And in amongst these engagés you might also find a smattering of expatriats from as far away as Germany or even the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Also, by the second decade of nineteenth century, many métis sons of the bourgeois or engagés had followed in the footsteps of their fathers.

BOURGEOIS

The North West Company’s bourgeois were divided into three levels of management: The Montreal agents, Wintering Partners, and clerks.

Montreal Agents

The Montreal agents or directors of the Company were merchants in Montreal, organized into their own firms or supply houses. These firms held Company shares and had responsibility for hiring personnel, exporting furs, acquiring goods, merchandise and provisions, and shipping them into the interior. For these services, the firms of agents received a commission in addition to the profit on their shares in the North West Company.

Wintering Partners

The role of the wintering partner in the North West Company was one of the secrets to its spectacular success. Instead of salaried servants managing the trade, as was the case with the Hudson’s Bay Company, the North West Company’s trade was managed by it’s own shareholders – called wintering partners – who wintered in the interior and supervised the trade in a district or “department” containing a number of posts. At the summer Rendezvous at Fort William, wintering partners met with the eastern agents of the company, and helped to direct the policies of

the company. Wintering partners – or proprietors as they were also called -- held one or two shares in the concern, and voted in their business meetings on the basis of one vote to one share. Their ambition to retire on the profits of their shares, or even to become an agent, provided the incentive to pursue Company goals relentlessly.

Clerks

No one could become a wintering partner without first serving as a clerk in the Interior. This had the advantage of stimulating the clerks to work diligently in the hope of being elevated to a partnership, while maintaining a group of potential managers trained in the field. While partners had charge of whole departments, the clerks handled the trade at the various posts and undertook much of the Company's bookkeeping.

All clerks served an apprenticeship of five to seven years. If not voted to full partnership after this period, they could continue with the company as clerks until such time as they might become partners. Promotion was not guaranteed though: many clerks remained in their positions until their retirement, and lost all expectation of advancement. It is possible that these clerks were less able fur traders, or deficient in their education, or simply not favoured by their superiors.

What should be noted is the necessity of an education to the duties performed by the management or gentleman class. Although they were not noble by birth, these men were able to achieve their positions because they could read and write.

ENGAGES

Further down the North West Company pay scale we find the engagés – skilled and unskilled labourers under contract to the North West Company.

Voyageurs

The voyageurs who powered the canoe brigades were the life-blood of the fur trade. They were divided into two geographical groups: those making the return trip between Montreal and Fort William during the summer and those who wintered in the interior. Usually less experienced than the winterers, the former were called "*mangeurs de lard*" or "pork eaters" because of their diet of salted pork; the more elite group of wintering voyageurs were known as "*hivernants*" (winterers) or "*hommes du nord*" (northmen).

Like the bourgeois, the voyageurs were divided into three levels of status, pay, and responsibility. This hierarchy is well illustrated by a voyageur's position in the canoe. A novice canoeman began as a *milieu* (middleman); then progressed to one of *les bouts* or ends of the canoe: the position of *gouvernail* (steersman) at the stern, or the *avant* in the bow, or front of the canoe. The highest ranking of all was the *guide* who headed the brigade, a group of three or more canoes. He usually took up a paddling position of *avant* or *gouvernail* when in the canoe.

At the Rendezvous, the guides and interpreters were the only voyageurs given a summer residence inside the palisade. They stayed in the Guides' House inside Fort William because of their higher status and importance in the transportation system. They also had the privilege of eating in the Great Hall with the gentlemen.

Tradesmen

Most of the tradesmen and common labourers hired by the NWC were stationed at larger fur trade centres. Some of the major posts in the far west might have an armourer or blacksmith for the repair of traps and trade muskets, but the largest complement of tradesmen was stationed at Fort William, the company's inland headquarters.

The engagés who stayed at Fort William were hired as skilled tradesmen and common labourers, although many had been required to act as voyageurs during the journey to the Fort. Mostly French Canadian, these workers farmed, fished, hunted, constructed and maintained the fort's buildings, and manufactured and mended trade items, canoes and sailing vessels. The tradesmen, as skilled labourers, were of a higher status than the common voyageurs - they were comparable to the guides. Even amongst the trades a hierarchy prevailed in terms of pay; metal workers were usually paid more than wood workers.

The North West Company's social structure reflects the hierarchical nature of European-Canadian society at the time. The elevation of certain classes allowed for an educated minority to effectively control the far more numerous labouring class. However, relations among company personnel were not as simple as the pyramid structure might represent. The bourgeois, though "higher-ranking", recognized the importance of earning the respect of their engagés. After all, bourgeois lives and profits were quite literally in engagé hands when traversing the country by canoe.

Of course, the ranks of company personnel make up only a part of a larger fur trade society that included the Native people, as well as the legacy that their contact with Europeans left behind: mixed-blood families. Beyond the pyramid representing company personnel there were the men, women, and children whose lives and experiences show an important outcome of Native-European contact.

CLASS STRUCTURE of the NORTH WEST COMPANY

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate factual knowledge of the North West Company class structure in their discussion and group presentation. They will exercise their analytical skills in comparing NWC class distinctions with our own. They will demonstrate co-operative learning and oral communication skills in the development and presentation of their group assignment.

TIMELINE:

Two 70-minute periods.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

Group presentation marks:
Content: 10 marks
Creativity: 5 marks
Quality of expression: 5 marks

INTRODUCTION:

To introduce this lesson, have the students develop a description of the social structure of our society. Encourage them to consider the factors of wealth, education, power, occupation and ancestry. The students' views should be recorded on the black board and organised into some sort of hierarchy.

DISCUSSION:

After the students have viewed the material on North West Company class structure, the teacher will confirm their comprehension by leading a discussion in which the North West Company structure will be compared to the students' perception of our social hierarchy. Ensure that the students understand not only the social divisions, but the role of each group within the company. It is recommended that this activity make use of the blackboard so the two may be compared and contrasted easily.

EXERCISE:

Have the students, in groups of 4-6, complete one of the following:

Have each member of your group portray one of the social classes found in the North West Company. Perform a skit in which the characters interact in an historically appropriate manner. Try to have the characters enter and exit at different times and show the change in the social dynamic when certain classes are present.
e.g. How much do the engages really respect their employers?

Develop a role-playing presentation that illustrates the class structure of the North West Company. Include a variety of situations and factors (travel, dining, socializing, work load, pay rates etc.).

Pair up and develop a skit in which a person from the fur trade era meets a person of similar social standing from the present, and have them explain to each other their roles and lifestyles. (Eg. A truck driver meets a voyageur; a bank teller meets an apprentice clerk).

FUR TRADE FAMILIES

The Canadian Fur Trade brought Europeans and Natives into close contact for extended periods of time. The men of the North West Company commonly spent the better part of their lives in the Interior. And while there, they often married and started families. As there were no white women and no churches, the marriages in the Interior were conducted with Native women in a style similar to Native marriages. These unions were known as marriages *a la façon du pays* or “in the custom of the country”. The general procedure seems to have been an exchange of gifts between the prospective husband and the bride’s family, sometimes followed by a cleansing ritual for the bride performed by the women of her tribe. Following this exchange, the man and woman were considered married by both the Natives and the fur traders.

The reasons for marriage *a la façon du pays* are many. The skills and knowledge of Native women were very valuable to the fur traders. These men often entered the trade at a young age, either fresh from school or from the farm. Native women were able to make moccasins and snowshoes, hunt, fish and gather food and teach the languages and customs of the country to the European men. Of course, family ties between a member of a fur trading company and a Native woman improved trading relations between the company and the tribe. These improved trading relations were equally desired by the Natives. For their part, the women probably felt that the European goods and provisions available to the wives of company men would make life easier for them. Because these marriages were seen as mutually advantageous by both men and women, they became quite common in the Interior.

While seen as binding for their duration, marriages *a la façon du pays* were sometimes a less permanent arrangement than traditional European marriages. When the marriage became undesirable for either party, it was dissolved. Within the marriage, this gave the Native woman much more power than a French-Canadian or British woman would have had at the time. In Upper and Lower Canada, a wife was actually considered to be a piece of her husband’s property, like a horse or a house. She had no option to leave her husband, and if she tried, she was likely to run up against all sorts of legal and social barriers. A Native woman in a fur trade marriage was able to leave the man without his consent. The knowledge that the woman could leave whenever she chose probably caused the men to behave a bit better than they might have in the East. However, the men took advantage of the semi-permanent nature of fur trade marriages in their own way. In many cases, the men would simply abandon their Native wives when they left the fur trade and returned to Montreal or Québec. Sometimes, however, the marriage was life-long. Many voyageurs remained in the interior after they left the company to live as “freemen” with their Native families. Likewise, some of the *bourgeois* kept their Native wives with them after their retirement, either settling with them in the interior, or taking them back to Upper or Lower Canada.

Peter Skene Ogden, a high-profile trader with both the North West and Hudson’s Bay Companies, held his country marriage to “Princess” Julia Rivet in such high regard, that he refused to have a church or civil ceremony when he had the chance. To Ogden, the years of public recognition of the union and their children were proof enough of their dedication, and “no formal words of priest or magistrate” were required to validate the marriage.

Another famous fur trader, Doctor John McLoughlin, was married a total of three times to his country wife Marguerite. The Doctor and Marguerite were married *a la façon du pays* for twenty-five years before having a civil ceremony performed at Fort Vancouver. Six years later, the McLoughlins had a Catholic ceremony performed that recognized and sanctioned their long-standing union in the eyes of the Church. It is interesting to note that the civil ceremony was performed in response to the insults heaped upon Marguerite by Reverend Herbert Beaver, an Anglican missionary at Fort Vancouver. Completely unwilling to accept country marriages as legitimate, Beaver repeatedly dismissed country wives as concubines and loose women. This repeated rudeness so enraged McLoughlin, that he publicly beat the Reverend with a sturdy walking stick.

The children of Company employees and Native women were the first of a new and distinct Canadian society, the *métis*. These children of mixed blood were raised by both Native and European parents and, therefore, combined both cultures in their way of life.

FUR TRADE FAMILIES

OUTCOMES:

The students will consider alternate views of what constitutes family. The students will gain experience in evaluation primary source documents. The students will demonstrate discussion and written communication skills.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION:

Familiarization with the material.

EVALUATION:

Reaction piece: Content - fact and well-expressed opinion (7 marks)
Mechanics (3 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

To introduce some of the themes of this lesson, the teacher should lead a class discussion on the question of what constitutes a marriage. It is hoped that views and opinions will differ. The teacher must take care to remain impartial and encourage a respectful tone to differences of opinion. There is also opportunity for the teacher to play devil's advocate should discussion wane. It is not important that a consensus be reached, only that the issue be raised and that the fact that opinions vary be made clear.

DISCUSSION:

After the students have viewed the material on Fur Trade Families, the teacher should use the following questions to encourage class discussion:

What constituted a fur trade marriage?

To what extent did the class of the man determine the lifestyle of the woman and children?

What were the reactions to these unions in Fur Trade Society?

What were the reactions to these unions in Native Society?

What were the reactions to these unions in European Society?

EXERCISE:

Have the students complete the following:

Read the included journal selections. What is your reaction to them? Put your responses in writing. Explain and support your opinions.

THE METIS

The fur trade led to the creation of a new, uniquely Canadian people: the Métis. These people, the children of European traders and Native women, combined elements of their ancestral cultures to create a culture that was shaped by, and in turn helped to shape, the fur trade.

The early French fur traders were often involved in liaisons with Native women, as it was their practice to go into the interior and live among the Natives for an extended period of time. We can, therefore, safely assume that there were many children of mixed-blood being raised as Natives in the sixteen and seventeen hundreds. With the rise of the North West Company and the resultant large-scale interior trade, the number of European men in the Interior increased. The North West Company encouraged marriage *a la façon du pays* between its employees and Native women. Native women were able to teach European men how to survive in the wilderness and family ties strengthened trading ties. The North West Company period, therefore, saw a dramatic rise in the number of mixed-blood children in the Interior.

At the time of the fur trade, the term *Métis* was not in use. The fur traders referred to these children variously as “mixed-blood”, “half-caste”, and “bois-brulé” which translates as “burnt wood”. Later on the general term “métis” came into use, to refer to anyone of mixed Native and European ancestry.

The North West Company traders, as educated men, were often inclined to educate their mixed-blood sons. Boys were sometimes sent to live with friends or relations in the East so that they might attend school. Having spent their early childhood being raised in the Native way by their mothers, the young métis then spent several years being raised and schooled in a European manner. These young men often joined the company as clerks and returned to the West as fur traders.

By the early eighteen hundreds, there was a sizable population of métis in the Red River area. Their lifestyle reflected the influence of both of the Native and European cultures. In terms of language, the blend of French, English, Cree and Ojibway influences led to two distinct dialects, patois and Michif. The clothing they wore was a combination of Native-style skin garments and European cloth. In terms of religion, the French combined the Native beliefs of their mothers with Catholicism, and the English mixed-bloods combined Native spirituality with Protestantism.

The métis lifestyle was a blend of semi-nomadic buffalo hunting in order to trade pemmican with the fur companies, and subsistence agriculture. Many métis worked for the North West Company on either a casual or contractual basis as interpreters, guides, hunters or traders, depending upon their level of education.

One of the first leaders of the métis as a unique and independent people was Cuthbert Grant. The son of a North West Company wintering partner and a Cree woman, Grant was baptised in Montreal and educated in Scotland. He returned to the interior at the age of nineteen as a clerk with the North West Company. Once he had returned to the prairies, Grant showed considerable talent as a hunter, horseman and leader. He was truly a blend of his two ancestral

cultures. He was recognised by the North West Company as the "Captain" or "Captain General of the Half-Breeds". He proved to be a valuable liaison between the traders and the métis, who were developing a sense of identity as a unique and distinct society. This distinct people became known in this century as the Métis nation, a politically distinct group having their origins in this part of Canada.

The Red River

Tumultuous events in the Red River coincided with Grant's leadership of the métis in the region. The competition between the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies had embodied itself in the Red River Settlement. The settlement was founded by Thomas Douglas, The Fifth Earl of Selkirk, a Scottish nobleman and major shareholder in the Hudson's Bay Company. Selkirk purchased a tract of land from the HBC so that he might start a settlement for farmers being displaced from their lands in Scotland. The HBC sold Selkirk the land on the condition that the colony provide men and supplies for the HBC. The colony, therefore, was closely associated with the Baymen. In addition to this damning fact, the colony was located at a primary shipping and provisioning junction for the North West Company. Initially, the Red River métis and North West Company assisted the colonists where possible. It is likely that the colonists would have faced starvation during their first winter had not the NWC supplied them with food.

As the colony's governors tried to exert their authority over the territory, both the métis and the NWC were outraged. Miles MacDonell, the first company governor, issued proclamations that prohibited the trade of pemmican or the running of buffalo, on the grounds that it diverted food from the colony. When these proclamations were ignored, MacDonell tried to seize pemmican forcibly from a nearby NWC post *La Souris*. After MacDonell's arrest by the NWC and the destruction of the colony by the métis, all seemed to be returning to normal in the Red River until the arrival of the new governor, Robert Semple, and more settlers. The métis continued to oppose the colony, and matters finally came to a head at the Battle of Seven Oaks where Semple and twenty settlers were killed by a group of métis hunters led by Cuthbert Grant. In the wake of Seven Oaks, Grant was arrested and charged with murder, but the charges were eventually dropped. While Grant has often been vilified for his role in the affair at Seven Oaks, he is best remembered as the first recognised leader of the métis as a distinct people

THE METIS

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate factual knowledge of the roots of the Métis. The students will show an understanding of the lifestyle of the métis and their contributions to the North West Company. The students will express themselves visually, orally and in writing over the course of this lesson and assignment.

TIMELINE:

Discussion and assignment: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION:

Familiarisation with material. Assembling of materials for assignment (bristol board, coloured pencils etc.)

EVALUATION:

Written/Visual Assignment: Factual Content (10 marks)
Visual Quality (5 marks)
Mechanics (5 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Have the students view the provided material with the following questions as a study guide:

Who were the métis?

What important contributions did they make to the fur trade?

How was their culture distinct from any other in Canada during the fur trade?

DISCUSSION:

Have the class generate a description of métis culture during the fur trade in terms of the following factors: Education, Religion, Source of Income, Source of Food. This description can be put on the blackboard in the form of a chart.

EXERCISE:

Have the students complete the following:

Using both visual images and text, illustrate how the métis culture combined both Native and European ways to create a new culture.

PERCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY

O, what an ugly man! Is it possible that any woman would look favourably on such a man? - a Huron Native man, upon seeing a French man with a beard for the first time.

Every society has ideas about what makes a “beautiful” person. These ideas change over time, and from place to place. Today, we think that we know what a “beautiful” person looks like: good-looking women are supposed to be thin, and handsome men are muscular and look like Brad Pitt. However, our own ideas about what is beautiful are not the only ones that exist, or the only ones that have ever existed. All of the societies in the fur trade had different ideas about human beauty. This is what the north West Company fur trader David Thompson wrote in his journal about beauty in the fur trade:

On the first arrival of a stranger in a camp, who has never seen them, he may not find the young women so handsome as he could wish, for there is a line of beauty in women which is somewhat different in every people and nation, but where, if the features are regular, we soon get habituated. These women have in general good features, though hardened by constant exposure to the weather. Their dress is of deer skin, mostly of the antelope, white and pliant, which is fastened over the shoulders, belted round the waist and descends to their ankles or to the ground. It shows them to advantage.³

Thompson felt that beauty was mostly a matter of familiarity. We decide if someone is beautiful by comparing the person with “beautiful” images which we are already used to. Sometimes, this can have unfortunate results. Huron Native men, who didn’t have beards, were moved to pity when the first bearded French traders arrived in 1632. One of them said:

“O, what an ugly man! Is it possible that any woman would look favourably on such a man?”

Native Women

Ask a Northern Indian, what is beauty [in a woman]? He will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones...a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook-nose, ... Those beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, when the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, converting them into the different parts of their clothing, and able to carry eight or ten stone [50-60 kg. or 112-140 lbs.] in Summer, or haul a much greater weight in Winter.⁴

This passage is quoted from the David Thompson’s journal. Thompson’s choice of words reflect how much the Native man’s “ideal” differs from his own. The Native man who was asked to describe a beautiful woman talked about her looks (the shape of her head, eyes, and body), but also about her skills - the ability to skin animals, make clothing, and carry the family’s

³ David Thompson. *Travels*. 207.

⁴ Samuel Hearne. *Journey to Northern Ocean*. 56.

possessions. In many Native societies, the women were generally thought to be physically stronger than the men, which is the opposite of how most people think about women today.

Consider this quote is from the journal of Samuel Hearne:

Some of the women tattoo three perpendicular lines, which are sometimes double: one from the centre of the chin to that of the under lip, and one parallel on either side to the corner of the mouth.

This quote is from Alexander Mackenzie's journal of his trip to the Pacific Ocean:

Both sexes have blue or black bars, or from one to four straight lines on their cheeks and forehead....These marks are either tattooed, or made by drawing a thread, dipped in the necessary colour, beneath the skin.⁵

Although tattoos have become more popular over the last few years, not many people get them done on their faces, which only goes to show that for some people, beauty is slightly more than skin deep.

To differing degrees, people adjust their appearance according to fashion. But cultural and religious factors may also play a role. Are the tattooed "bars" on the face of the Native described above simply a response to "fashion" in order to appear beautiful, or does this face-painting also have cultural or religious meaning? What happens if we compare Native face-painting to modern face make-up; are they versions of the same thing or entirely different? How are our modern "standards" of beauty formed? These questions are difficult to answer, but asking them helps us to gain more insight into the workings of our own society.

Who is in control of beauty? One way to answer this question is to find out where the images of beauty come from, and who controls and produces them. In the world of the Native Americans, a world without teenage fashion magazines and the Spice Girls, the only place that images of beauty could come from were other people in the tribe. Today, we take our cue from people on television or movie screens and in magazines -- people we have never met but are held up as standards for beauty.

Native Men

Here is a quote from the journal of Nicholas Garry, a fur trader with the Hudson's Bay Company:

...a very handsome man and great Dandy was very much painted red and white. In his Ears large round Earrings and Rings in his Nose. His Hair in a Tail behind and plaited in long Strings in Front which were joined by silver clasps.⁶

⁵ Alexander MacKenzie. *Voyages*. 123.

⁶ Nicholas Garry. *The Diary of Nicholas Garry*. 51.

In the last few years, it has become more common for men to wear earrings, and even sometimes nose rings, which these fellows have. However, very few men wear their hair in braids with silver jewelry attached to it. And it is rather rare that anyone paints their whole face red and white, except on patriotic holidays. David Thompson recorded another custom of Native men, this time of the Piegans of the western Plains near the Rocky Mountains.

I have known some of them [Piegan men] to take full an hour to paint their faces with white, red, green, blue, and yellow, or part of these colours, with their looking glasses and advising one another how to lay on the different colours in stripes, circles, dots, and other fancies; then stand for part of the day in some place of the camp to be admired by the women.⁷

This passage reminds us that perceptions of beauty are in the eye of the beholder, and the beholder is of course informed by the culture in which he or she lives. There are no “natural” laws dictating that make-up be worn by either men or women, only the cultural norms that have evolved in our societies over time. In our society today, we are much more likely to see make-up on women than men.

European men

European men at the time of the fur trade had a very different fashion sense than the average businessman does today. This painting of North West Company explorer Alexander Mackenzie shows some of the qualities that a “gentleman” in the late 1700’s hundreds and early 1800’s was expected to display. The high collar is meant to suggest a certain nobility - peasants and workmen were usually short and stocky (often because they got less food than the rich), and the illusion of a very long neck sets Mackenzie off from the dirty and squat lower classes.

Mackenzie’s skin looks very pale, which gives the suggestion that he does no physical work; people who had suntans were people who worked outdoors, on a farm, for example. The fashionable gentleman wanted to look as though he was rich enough to pay others to do the physical work for him, while he carried on with more important business.

The final interesting thing about this painting is Mackenzie’s hair, which is of medium length. People with very short hair were usually looked at a bit suspiciously, because hair was an indicator of health. Anything close to baldness, especially if it looked like the person had taken the trouble to have the hair cut very close to the head, meant that the person had lice, or that some disease had caused hair loss.

European women

Women who lived in Québec or Montreal had very definite standards of beauty to measure themselves against, imported of course from Britain. This picture of Ann McGillivray, daughter of the North West Company partner Simon McGillivray, provides an example of a 1790’s upper-class woman.

⁷ David Thompson. *Travels 1784-1812*. 207.

She's very pale, which suggests that she's been in the house reading a book or listening to chamber music rather than being out in the fields working, which was the job of the servants and peasants. The sloping shoulders were considered very feminine at the time, as was the tiny waist, which was laced into a *corset*, which is a sort of girdle to make the waist smaller. This might be part of the reason why women of the period had a reputation as delicate little things who would faint at the slightest excitement - it is very likely that Ann couldn't eat very much when she was laced into the corset all day long. On the other hand, she might have been a very intense person. Consider her eyes: it was very fashionable to have large black pupils - and many women took *belladonna* (which means "beautiful woman"), or nightshade, a stimulant drug which made the pupils look bigger.

PERCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY

OUTCOMES: Students will demonstrate specific knowledge of various perceptions of beauty by comparing and contrasting historical ideals with those of today. Students will demonstrate both objective knowledge of these ideals, and a subjective evaluation of the same. Students will “demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which their own cultural traditions have shaped them, and an appreciation for their own uniqueness and that of others.” (Common Curriculum) Students will “identify implicit as well as explicit messages and biases in media texts and critically examine the reactions of others to a range of media texts”. (Common Curriculum)

TIMELINE: Introduction and writing assignment: 70 minutes. Group oral presentations: 70 minutes.

PREPARATION: Cut pictures from magazines that aptly illustrate the current ideal of beauty.

EVALUATION: The students’ essays and group presentations will form the basis of the evaluation. The marks should be broken down as follows:

ESSAY 10 marks historic content
10 marks expressed opinion
5 marks mechanics (spelling, grammar, format)

PRESENTATION 10 marks oral expression
10 marks group participation (peer evaluation)
5 marks work process (teacher’s observation)

Additional marks may be assigned for participation in classroom discussions.

INTRODUCTION: Present the students with the following questions for discussion:

What is beautiful?

Who decides what is beautiful?

What trends in fashion and beauty can you remember that are no longer popular?

DISCUSSION: Distribute the quotations and pictures from the fur trade period. Preface this with a reminder that these descriptions represent the ideals of another time and other cultures and that they should be considered respectfully.

Having allowed time for the material to be viewed, ask for reactions to these ideals. To maintain the discussion, the following questions may be asked:

What were the predominant features associated with beauty at this time?

Why were these features desirable?

How did women alter their appearance to fit the beauty ideal of the time?

How did men alter their appearance to fit the beauty ideal of the time?

How do women alter their appearance to fit the current beauty ideal?

How do men alter their appearance to fit the current beauty ideal?

*What possible biases affect the authors of these quotations?
What examples of gender or cultural bias are contained in these quotations?
Is beauty, as David Thompson suggests, directly related to familiarity?*

INDIVIDUAL WRITING EXERCISE:

Examine the pictures and quotations from the fur trade and the present time. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Is one set of ideals more logical than the other? Why or why not? Which of the images do you find the most beautiful? Is there a cultural bias present in your own perception of beauty? Write a brief, one-page essay on this topic.

GROUP ASSIGNMENT: In groups of three to six, the students will prepare a presentation on one of the following topics:

Beautification procedures, then and now.
Historical Ideals vs. Current Ideals
Who determines beauty?

The presentation will have both an oral and visual component. The students should be given a great deal of freedom in choosing the exact format. For example, the students may wish to illustrate these themes with a skit, dialogue with illustrations, a mini-lesson, or some combination of formats.

VOYAGEUR SONG AND MUSIC

Singing was an essential part of the life of a voyageur. In fact voyageurs who lead the crew in a loud and inspiring song were paid a little more than other voyageurs. The songs sung by the voyageurs came with the first French colonists to arrive in New France. Early settlers sang as they threshed grain, washed clothing, or as they spun and wove cloth. There was also singing when family and friends met. As time passed many of the words were changed and new songs developed to reflect the 'new' life in New France. For example, the song *V'la l'bon vent* can be sung over ninety different ways - versions that developed in both France and New France. Today it is estimated that there are between 7000 and 13 000 French Canadian folksongs, 90 percent of which were developed in this early period.

Voyageurs sang for many different reasons. Singing French songs reminded them of their French ancestors and France. It was also a way to celebrate at social events and to enjoy life. Songs were sung about love, the newness of spring, the weather, and the wind. Sometimes the songs were funny; such as *Alouette* where the singer tells that he will pluck the parts off a poor lark. Sad songs were sung as the men departed their families as they travelled into the interior. Other melodies were bittersweet love stories. A popular song with the voyageurs was *A la claire fontaine*. It tells of the loss of love between a young man and woman.

One of the most important reasons that the voyageurs sang so often was to make the difficult and demanding work that they did a little easier. The songs kept a simple rhythm that all of the men could follow when paddling the canoe. This not only made the time go by faster, but actually made the work easier. When all of the men pulled on their paddles at the same time the canoe moved quickly through the water. Songs were sung that encouraged the men on difficult portages, comforted them in bad weather, and kept them paddling for up to eighteen hours a day. Ross Cox wrote in 1810 that: "The poor voyageurs, who were in a starving condition, kept up *les chansons a l'aviron* until day-break to divert their hunger."¹

Singing was done with all of the men together, but sometimes two men would lead the song, two men would respond and then all would join together in the chorus. They could go on for hours singing and even creating new pieces of music as they crossed lakes and paddled along rivers.

There were also several instruments that were used by the voyageurs. A voyageur that could play an instrument was very appreciated by his friends and the men of his canoe. One such instrument was the Jew's Harp or Jaw's Harp, or in French, the *giumbarde*. The Jew's Harp is a simple instrument that is made of brass or iron with a flat tongue. It is possible that some voyageurs made their own harps. The other instrument that voyageurs played was the fiddle. Some men made rasping homemade violins. Strings for the instrument were found at many of the trading posts in the interior.

When the voyageurs reached their destination, for example Fort William, it was a time of relaxation. Friends met, and the time was spent at nights of drinking, dancing, gambling, fighting, and singing. They sang dancing songs for a night of spirited steps. Known as *roundelays*, some dances were more similar to small plays, in which the men acted the words of a song. Voyageurs frequently danced as a group when women were unavailable as partners. On one occasion at Fort William the voyageurs of the North West Company pushed their way into a ball that was being held in the Great Hall. The men and the women danced reels throughout the night.

Voyageur Song and Music

Outcomes:

By learning and performing a voyageur folk song and dance students will enhance their understanding of rhythm, syncopation and the reading of music. Students will learn to identify the French Canadian folk song genre through discussion and performance and learn why song and dance was so integral to a voyageur, his work and recreation.

Timeline:

90 minutes

Preparation:

Song: En Roulant Ma Boule

The musical score and lyrics to En Roulant Ma Boule can be printed from the Voyageur Study Unit (Song and Dance section) on the CD-ROM. An audio sample of En Roulant Ma Boule sung by Old Fort William's student choir can also be downloaded from the Song and Dance section of the CD-ROM. The words and music for three other folk songs can also be found in the same Study Unit and section. Old Fort William Historic Park has produced a music CD and tape compilation of traditional voyageur songs. This compilation can be ordered by phoning (807) 473 - 2323.

Print out one song sheet per student or show on an overhead. Access to computer for audio sample of tune is required if you don't have the CD or tape to play.

Dance: Farandole

Review the material provided on the CD-ROM on the role and importance of music among the voyageur. In the Song and Dance Study Unit a text description and a video demonstrating the Farandole can be viewed.

Clear an area or have access to the school yard/gym with a space that will be slightly larger than a large circle containing all your students. Lively fiddle music of any type will be quite suitable.

Evaluation:

Each student will receive a base mark for active participation in the song and dance. You may wish to break the class into 6 groups, each responsible for leading a verse of En Roulant Ma Boule.

Introduction:

Briefly outline the intent of this exercise and a little about the voyageur and the importance of song and dance to him. Play some voyageur songs for the students, having them clap along to the rhythm.

Discussion:

After the students have reviewed the study unit on the CD-ROM, address the following questions:

Why was song and dance so important to the voyageur?

Do the students know of any other cultures where song and dance are an important part of work and recreation? Migrant crop pickers in the southern USA; the common chants and team songs found in hockey arena and soccer stadiums; the bass rhythm's used by aerobic instructors.

Exercise:

Song: En Roulant Ma Boule

To begin, have your students listen to the song being played, while following along with the written words. Once the song has been played once through, have the students sing the chorus a few times.

Work your way through verses one to three, singing the chorus in between. Repeat the first three verses several times before moving on to the next three verses.

Sing the next three verses, again repeating them several times.

Start at the beginning and sing the song straight through.

You may divide the class into six small groups and have each group lead an assigned verse.

Dance: Farandole

To begin, have your students form a large circle, hands joined. (It is best if you lead the students in the dance at least once before assigning a student to lead.) Start the group moving (walking) in a circle to the right. Once you have completed one full rotation (keep walking), drop only your right hand and begin to walk in side the circle, always keeping close to the students. Continue winding around in rotations until you are in the center of the circle. Turn your right shoulder back, to the right and make your way back out through the circle using your right hand to guide you through the rows of students. Once you are out of the circles, lead the group to form a line, turn to your left, (now facing the row of students, still holding hands) and have everyone raise their arms to form a bridge for you to go under, winding in and out of the line. When you have got to the end of the line, (still holding hands) lead the group back to form one complete circle. Everyone together takes three steps towards the center of the circle and calls out a wolf howl. Everyone takes three steps back and repeats moving inward, and calling out a wolf howl.

¹Thomas A. Sebeok, *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 67, (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, 1954), 90. As quoted from Ross Cox, *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition (1810)*.

A La Claire Fontaine

1
A la clai - re fon - tai - ne M'en al - lant

4
pro - me - ner, J'ai trou - vé l'eau si bel - le

7
Que je m'y wuis bai - gné. Lui ya long -

10
temps que je t'aime, — - Ja - mais je ne t'ou - blie - rai.

Verses:

2. J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle
Que je m'y suis baigné;
Sous les feuilles d'un chêne
Je me suis fait sécher.
Lui ya longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai.
3. Sous le feuilles d'un chêne
Je me suis fait sécher;
Sur la plus haute branche
Le rossignol chantait.
Lui ya long temps que je t'aime
Jamais je ne t'oublierai.
4. Sur la plus haute branche
Le rossignol chantait.
Chante, rossignol, chante,
Toi qui as le cœur gai.
Lui ya long temps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai.

Alouette

A - lou-et - te, gen - tille a - lou-et - te. A - lou-et - te,
 je te plu - me-rai Je te plu - me-rai la tête, je te plu - me-rai la tête
 Et la tête, et la tête. A - lou-ette, a - lou-ette. O - O - O - Oh
 A - lou-et - te, gen-tille a - lou-et - te. A - lou-et - te, je te plu - me-rai.

Refrain:

O-O-O-Oh Alouette, gentille alouette.
 Alouette, je te plumarai.

Verses:

1. Je te plumerai la tête, (2 times)
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
2. Je te plumerai le bec, (2 times)
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
3. Je te plumerai le cou, (2 times)
 Et le cou, et le cou.
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
4. Je te plumerai le dos, (2 times)
 Et le dos, et le dos.
 Et le cou, et le cou.
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
5. Je te plumerai les ailes, (2 times)
 Et les ailes, et les ailes.
 Et le dos, et le dos.
 Et le cou, et le cou.
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
6. Je te plumerai le queue, (2 times)
 Et le queue, et le queue.
 Et les ailes, et les ailes.
 Et le dos, et le dos.
 Et le cou, et le cou.
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.
7. Je te plumerai les pattes, (2 times)
 Et les pattes, et les pattes.
 Et le queue, et le queue.
 Et les ailes, et les ailes.
 Et le dos, et le dos.
 Et le cou, et le cou.
 Et le bec, et le bec.
 Et la tête, et la tête.
 Alouette, alouette.

C'est L'aviron



1
M'en re - ve - nant de la jo - lie Ro - chel - le,

5
M'en re - ve - nant de la jo - lie Ro - chel - le,

9
J'ai ren - con - tré trois jo - lies de - moi - sel - es.

13
C'est l'a - vi - ron qui nous mè - ne, qui nous mè - ne,

17
C'est l'a - vi - ron qui nous mène en haut.

Refrain:

C'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène,
C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut.

Verses:

1. M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle; (2)
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.
2. J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles; (2)
J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle.
3. J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle; (2)
J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi sur ma selle.
4. J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi sur ma selle; (2)
J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.
5. J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle. (2)
Au bout de cent lieues, elle me d'mandit à boire.
6. Au bout de cent lieues, elle me d'mandit à boire.
Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine.
7. Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine; (2)
Quand elle fut là, elle ne voulut point boire.
8. Quand elle fut là, elle ne voulut point boire; (2)
Je l'ai menée au logis de son père.
9. Je ;'ai menée au logis de son père; (2)
Quand elle fut là, elle buvait à plens verres.
10. Quand elle fut là, elle buvait à plens verres. (2)
À la santé de son père et sa mère.
11. À la santé de son père et sa mère; (2)
À la santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.
12. À la santé de ses soeurs et ses frères; (2)
À la santé de celui que son coeur aime.

En Roulant Ma Boule

1
En rou-lant ma bou - le rou-lant, En rou-lant ma bou - le

5
En rou-lant ma bou - le rou-lant, En rou-lant ma bou - le Der -

9
rière chez nous, y'a t'un è tang, En rou-lant ma bou - le, Trois

13
beaux ca-nards s'en vont bai-gnant rou - li, rou lant, ma bou - le rou-lant

17
En rou-lant ma bou - le rou-lant, En rou-lant ma bou - le.

Refrain:

En Roulant ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule (2 times)

Verses:

1. Derrière chez nous, y'a t'un étang,
En roulant ma boule,
Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant
2. Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant
En roulant ma boule,
Le fils du roi s'en va chassant
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant
3. Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,
En roulant ma boule,
Avec son grand fusil d'argent
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant
4. Avec son grand fusil d'argent,
En roulant ma boule,
Visa le noir, tua le blanc
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant
5. Visa le noir, tua le blanc,
En roulant ma boule,
O fils du roi, tu es méchant
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant
6. O fils du roi, tu es méchant,
En roulant ma boule,
D'avoir tué mon canard blanc!
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant

WOMEN IN NEW FRANCE

The women, who came to New France, emigrated mainly from cities in the northwestern part of France. They also came from towns near Paris. Many of the women from these areas were educated and involved in the business affairs of their communities. Knowledge of reading, writing and trade were important skills that helped the women when they travelled across the ocean to start a new way of life in New France. Some women who came were married women or daughters who came with their families. However, the majority of women who immigrated to New France were unmarried. There were two distinct groups of single female immigrants.

The first group was made up of nuns who worked as either teachers or nurses in the communities of New France. Women like Marie d'Incarnation came to New France to teach reading, writing, and domestic skills to Native and French girls in Quebec. In 1663 in Montreal, there was no school available for boys, but the nuns provided an education to the girls of the city. One traveller remarked that women "in general receive more education than the men."¹ Other nuns travelled into rural areas to teach girls who did not live in the city. Jeanne Mance arrived and set up the *Hôtel-Dieu*, a hospital in Montreal, and spent many years treating the sick and injured.

The second major group of women, who immigrated to New France, were the *fille du roi*. One of the problems in New France was that there were few women. Men outnumbered the women six to one, and in some cases eight to one. To form new young families and to increase the population of the small colony, King Louis XIV arranged to send women to New France. Approximately 800 of these women, called *fille du roi*, arrived between the years 1663 to 1673. The women ranged in age from 12 to 25. About 30% of them came from *Hôpital-Général* in Paris, a home for orphans and abandoned children. Others were women whose parents could not find husbands for them. Some were even women of the nobility or bourgeois class of French society.

When these women arrived in New France they quickly married, often within a few months of their arrival. This did not give them much time to decide on the man to marry, but most smart women chose a man who had already built a home. All men were encouraged to marry. A fur trader could even lose his licence to trade if he did not have a wife!

Women played very important roles in the daily life of New France. They cared for children, tended gardens, took care of animals, wove and spun cloth, and sewed clothing for the family. These were some of the tasks no doubt done by Marie Hébert, one of the first French women to settle in New France. Women were also willing and able to defend their homes. When she was 14, Marie-Madeleine Jarret de Verchères saved her life and the lives of the people living on her family seigneurie from Iroquois attack. If their husbands travelled to trade for fur with the Natives, women took over running the

¹ *Memoires de Pierre de Sales Laterriere et de ses traverses* (Quebec, 1873), 52-3 found in Mason Wade, *The French Canadians 1760-1945* (Toronto: MacMillian Company of Canada, 1955), 77.

family business or farm. Marie-Anne Barbel ran her husband's affairs while he explored and traded. When he died, she took control of his fur trading business. Some women were active fur traders. They were involved in everything from trading goods with the Natives to shipping pelts to France. The women of New France, unlike elsewhere in Europe, were allowed to own property. Madeleine de Roybon d'Allonne, a *fille du roi* who never married, owned a large seigneurie. She also spoke with the government of New France to convince them to allow settlers to trade fur freely. Many of the women were well educated and wrote letters and books related to their experiences in New France.

Women in the New World

OUTCOMES:

The students will demonstrate factual knowledge of the social history of women in three time periods: France & New France (1663-1673); the United States of America & Upper Canada (1780-1790); and the Indian Territories & the Canadas (1805-1815). Students will exercise their analytical skills by making comparisons that will require the recollection of previously covered material.

TIMELINE:

One, seventy-minute period.

PREPARATION:

Familiarisation with material.

EVALUATION:

Written Assignment: Content (5 marks)

Expression (3 marks)

Mechanics (2 marks)

INTRODUCTION:

Briefly review with the class the material covered in the Social History lessons. The provided material on North America should then be viewed.

DISCUSSION:

Generate with the class a list of similarities and differences between the social histories of women in New France, British North America and the Indian Territories. This list will provide the foundation for the written assignment.

Some points to consider:

- Government incentives (i.e. land grants);
- Relations between natives and colonists (Friendly, hostile, neutral? What effect will this have on your new way of life?).
- Relations between the European colonies (Friendly, hostile, neutral? What effect will this have on your new way of life?).
- Social position (Your social class. Does this restrict or open your options?).

- Economic importance (What skills do you have to contribute to society? Are these skills considered valuable in your new situation?).
- Relative independence (What restrictions are imposed on the individual? What options are available to a woman at that time and place?)
- Food supply (Is the food new and strange? Is it in sufficient supply? Does it provide a balanced diet (if not, do you know how to supplement your diet?)
- Health concerns (the perils of disease and physical injuries).
- Family (What does your mother and father think of your new situation? Do they have the same concerns?).
- Social values (Are there any differences in what is seen as good or proper behaviour in your new home compared with your old?).

EXERCISE:

The students will write a letter, written by a daughter who has recently immigrated to a new land. This letter, written to her mother will be based on one of the three listed time periods. This letter should contain similarities and differences between the new life and the old, as well as her hopes and expectations for her new life. These hopes and expectations should be based on a practical evaluation of her present situation as well as the beliefs and values a young woman of the times would hold.

France & New France (1663-1673)

One of King Louis XIV *fille du roi* writes home from Montreal. (Note: although most of the women were from the peasantry, there were a few from the bourgeois and nobility).

United States of America & Upper Canada (1780-1790)

The daughter of a United Empire Loyalist writes home from York. (Her mother may have been delayed in making the trip, or perhaps she and her side of the family sided with the rebels).

Indian Territories & the Canadas (1805-1815)

The daughter of a North West Company Wintering Partner is sent east for schooling. (The letter would be read to the mother by her husband or a son or daughter who can read).

Note: As an option the boys in the class could write a letter from the perspective of a young man concerning the prospects for his sister if she were to join him in the new world.