



Festival du Voyageur



Fort Gibraltar Live! Grades 7-8



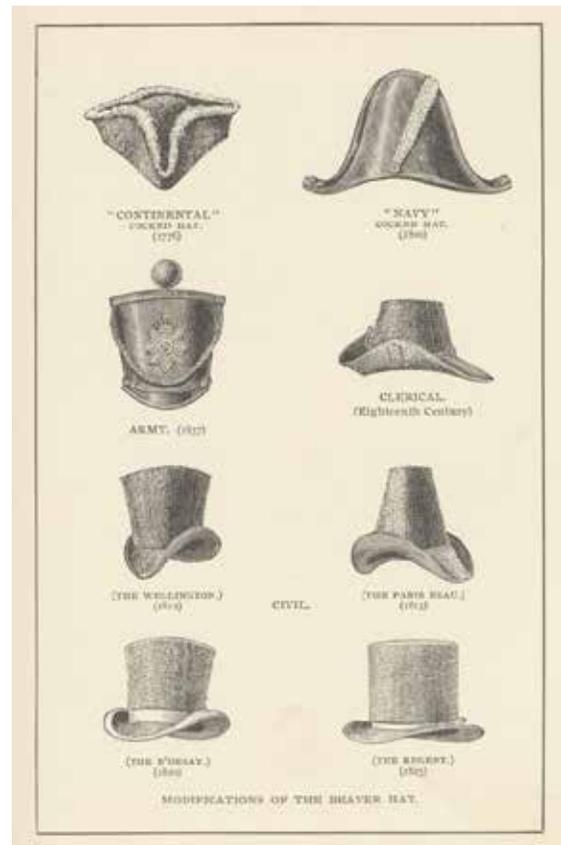
Welcome to Fort Gibraltar! Whether you're visiting online or in-person, this activity guide is a fun way to get to know the people of the fur trade. There are 3 activities to do before your visit, and 3 to do after your visit. Have fun, and Hé Ho!

(i-1) Introduction activity #1 – The Journey from Fur to Hat

By the time that Fort Gibraltar was built in 1810, beaver felt had been the preferred material for fine felt hats for several centuries. In fact, one of the first mentions of beaver hats comes from the 14th century English poet Geoffrey Chaucer, who called it a "Flaundryssh bevere hat".

But the journey from fur to hat is a long one. See if you can put this journey in the right order.

- The felt is stretched over a hat mold and left to dry and harden.
- Bales are shipped overseas to England and purchased by hatters
- Beaver pelts are exchanged for trade goods with the NWCo
- Down is shaved from the pelt and mixed with chemicals to form a sheet of hair called felt.
- Beavers are trapped by Indigenous trappers in Northwestern Canada
- Beaver felt hat is ready to be worn.
- Hatters separate the guard hair from the pelt leaving the down.
- Pelts are packed in bales and transported to Montreal by canoe



These are different styles of beaver hat throughout the centuries.
Library and Archives Canada.

(i-2) Introduction Activity #2 – Telling history through objects - Part 1

Before participating in your livestream, think about how objects can help us tell the stories of the past. While you're watching the livestream, think about the following questions. Feel free to ask about these objects in the question period of the livestream.

Name of the object (if you know it)

When and where was it made?

What is its function in the fur trade?

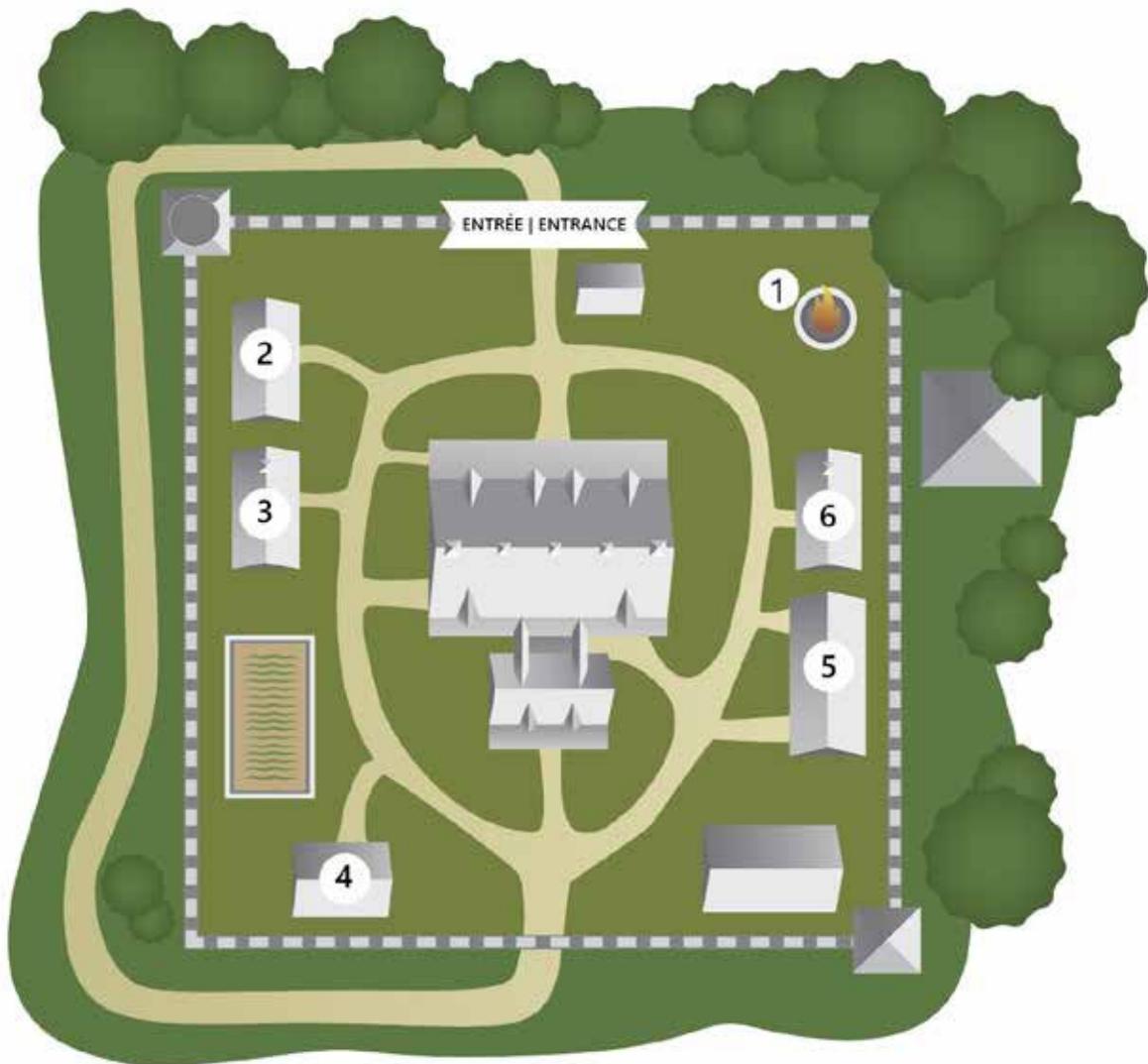
What can it tell us about life in the fur trade?

If it was an artifact in a museum today, what would you say about it? Imagine you're a curator (a museum specialist) and you have to write a description about your chosen artifact. Write your description here.

(i-3) Introduction Activity #3 – Get to know the fur trade at Fort Gibraltar!

Fort Gibraltar was built by the North West Company (NWC) in 1810 where the Red and Assiniboine rivers meet. Home to a staff of 10 to 20 voyageurs, canoe guides, interpreters, tradesmen, clerks and NWC wintering partners or Bourgeois, the fort was a centre for fur trade business and for developing communities in the early days of Winnipeg. Fort Gibraltar was well placed to be able to trade for provisions with several different Indigenous nations, like the Cree, Anishinaabe, Dakota, Nacoda, Mandan, and Métis. Keeping those provisions away from the Hudson's Bay Company (their main rivals) was the North West Company's main preoccupation in 1815, the year that you'll see during your visit.

Try and match up the description to the name and placement on the map, found on the next page. Write the number of the station in the box in the description.



1 - Outdoor Kitchen

2 - Trading Post

3 - Workshop

4- Forge

5 - Warehouse

6 - Winterer's Cabin

Cabins and Stations at Fort Gibraltar

In this building, the hides prepared by Indigenous traders were then exchanged for goods imported from the east. The North West Company clerk diligently kept a record of everything that was traded and given as gifts, and he was responsible for maintaining friendly trading relationships with the local Indigenous nations.



Photo by Dan Harper.



Voyageurs were paid a wage, given equipment, room and board (in cabins like this one), and were expected to obey their masters. Games and gambling also played an important role in the social life of voyageurs, and they played games like boxing, racing on foot (or in canoes), and wrestling. They also played cards, cribbage, 9-man morris, and dominoes.

Photo by Dan Harper.

Blacksmiths performed essential repairs on metalworks around the fort and the settlement, fixing things like traps, gun parts, locks, brackets, spears, knives, and farming tools.



Photo by Jules Brodeur

This place was used by engagés and Indigenous day labourers for tasks such as smoking waterfowl and fish, drying meat, melting grease, and parching wild rice and maize. Most forts of this size would have had clay bake ovens for baking bread and hard biscuit.



Photo by Liz Tran.

This cabin is a provisions depot, and provisions include pemmican, wild rice, potatoes, grease, and dried meat including fish. These provisions mostly come from the local Indigenous Nations and will be used to feed voyageurs as they travel across the Northwest.



Photo by Dan Harper.

For voyageurs who wintered over as part of their contract, this cabin is where they built, maintained, and repaired anything they could at the fort, such as the walls, cabins, furniture, machines, and tools. There were also special carpenters called coopers, and they made barrels and casks for transporting wet goods.



Photo by April Carandang.

(r-1) Reflection Activity #1 – Women and girls in the fur trade

Women, especially Indigenous women, were very connected with the fur trade. On the following page are some examples of real historical women who participated in the fur trade. Looking at a couple of these, and thinking about your virtual visit to Fort Gibraltar, reflect the following questions.

Name and describe 3 tasks that women and girls performed in the fur trade.

What skills from their own communities did these women and girls bring to the fur trade?

What are some of the benefits for women and girls participating in the fur trade? Or some of the drawbacks?

Mary Lafontaine (Assiniboine)

Mary worked at Pine Fort in southwestern Manitoba between 1793-1795. She was paid equal to 15 beaver pelts in credit for lacing 14 pairs of snowshoes, cutting 10 bison hides into cord for packing bales and 10 more bison hides into thongs.

Ki-ni-sti-no-quay (Anishinaabe)

In 1821, she worked for the American Fur Company as a trader, earning a salary of \$200 a year. She was married to another fur trader named Simon Charette, and was the sister of Kishkemun (or Sharpening Stone) who was the chief of the Lac du Flambeau band. Her name means "Cree woman" in Anishinaabemowin.

Anastasie Cadotte (Anishinaabe)

Anastasie was the Anishinaabe wife of Jean-Baptiste Cadotte, a wintering partner of the NWCo. She was a trader herself, sometimes even managing Jean-Baptiste's trading operations in Sault-Sainte-Marie in his absence. Madame Cadotte was well-respected by the NWCo men that she worked with.

Descriptions of Indigenous women in the fur trade

The sources of the information on these women can be found on the next page.

La Petite Rivière (Anishinaabe)

She was a trader in the Lake of the Woods in 1804, and she collected spruce gum and tanned 3 deer hides for Michel Curot, a fur trader. She was paid with 2 pairs of wool leggings and a 3 point blanket.

Net-no-kwa (Odawa)

Netnokwa was an Odawa chief. Netnokwa was a skilled trader and guide in the Ottawa Valley and in the prairies. Highly respected, she received gifts from trading companies, like a chief's dress and ornaments in exchange for beaver skins. She often used alternate fur trade routes to avoid being ambushed by European traders.

Jeanny (Cree-Métis)

She was the wife of HBC trader John Sutherland who worked at a post on the Assiniboine River. She was educated at Fort Albany, which is quite unique since most girls did not go to school at the time. Daniel Harmon, a well-known fur trader, thought she was accomplished, well-read, and great at conversation. She was also really good at playing Cribbage!



Looking at what this lady is wearing and what she's carrying in this drawing, reflect on how she may have participated in the fur trade.

«A man and his wife returning with a load of partridges from their tent.» - William Richards, c.1800. (HBCA - T5508)

Sources on the descriptions of Indigenous women

Many of these sources are from university textbooks or primary sources, which means they might be difficult to obtain or even read without some help. If you need help getting or understanding these sources, let your teacher know. They can also contact the Heritage and Education department at Festival du Voyageur. We would be happy to help you learn more about the fur trade!

Mary LaFontaine

Journal of John MacDonell, Assiniboines-Rivière Qu'Appelle, 1793-95. Typescript copy in LAC MC MG19 C1, Vol. 54, Microfilm reel C-15640.

Ki-ni-sti-no-quay

Nelson, G. 2002. "First Winter in the Northwest, 1802-03." in Peers, L. and Schenck, T. (eds) *My First Years in the Fur Trade: The Journals of 1802-1804*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. pp: 27-94.

Anastasie Cadotte

Van Kirk, S. 1980. *Many tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*. Watson Dwyer Publishing Limited.

La Petite Rivière

White, B. M. 1999. "The Woman who married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa fur trade." *Ethnohistory*. 46 (2) Pp: 109-147.

Net-No-Kwa

Tanner, J. 1830. *A Narrative of the captivity and adventures of John Tanner*. James, E. (ed).

Jeanny Sutherland

Van Kirk, S. 1980. *Many tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*. Watson Dwyer Publishing Limited.

(r-2) Reflection Activity #2 – Tell the Story in Fur Trade History

You have been exploring life in a particular moment in fur trade history by visiting Fort Gibraltar and looking at some historical sources. Now, you will use the historical information and evidence you've heard to tell a story. You may do one of two things. Pick a pivotal moment in fur trade history **OR** pick a common scenario that may have happened in the fur trade and build a story around that.

Pivotal moments in fur trade history at Red River

- 1) The Pemmican Proclamation
- 2) The arrival of the European fur trade to Red River
- 3) The Battle of Seven Oaks
- 4) The Tobacco Treaty
- 5) The HBC/NWCo merger

Fur trade interaction scenarios (these were all recorded in fur trade journals)

- 1) A clerk goes to a community to trade for much needed provisions.
- 2) A canoe full of voyageurs lose their paddles.
- 3) A group of NWCo men go to an HBC fort to harass them and steal goods.
- 4) A group of Anishinaabe women comes to the fort to smoke ducks and fish.
- 5) An explorer records new species of animals he's never seen.

Remember that a story includes all of the following elements:

Plot – What actions happen and in what order? The events in the story build a sense of adventure of human survival, experience, conflict, hopes, and accomplishments.

Setting – Where and when does this story take place? This is setting the scene for your story.

Characters – Who are the main people or groups? What are they like?

Theme – What is the “big idea” behind this story? What do you want the listener to remember after you have told this story?

Style – This is the way you tell the story. If you relate the story with style, you use language and rhythm to seize the attention of your audience. (Think of examples of stories you have heard or read.)

Most stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But since your story is part of an ongoing story, this end is never quite really the end. You will want to leave your audience with a sense of “to be continued.”

After you have written your story, try sharing it with your classmates. Practice reading the story aloud if you will be presenting it to the class. You may also wish to create it as a comic strip or picture book.

Something to think about...

The fur trade story is deeply connected to the history of Indigenous communities in Manitoba. We must be respectful when talking about them and how they were involved in the fur trade. Many documents and retellings of their stories are often told from the perspective of settlers, like fur traders, colonists, and explorers. These representations were often not fair or accurate, and sometimes they were racist.

As you read books, articles, or blogs about fur trade events for your story, remember that these perspectives come from people who may not understand Indigenous communities and their lives. If possible, try and find sources by Indigenous authors!

And finally, remember that these stories feature very real people who existed in the past and whose descendants might still be with us today. In general, it's a good idea to represent people from the past with respect. After sharing the story: Reflect on these questions, discussing them in your group or writing about them.

- 1) What has changed since the beginning of this story? What is different in Manitoba as a result of this story?
- 2) What remained the same from beginning to end?
- 3) Why is this an important event or part of the fur trade experience?

Jot down your thoughts and ideas about your story here.

(r-3) Reflection activity #3 – Can you reconstruct Fort Gibraltar?

In 1818, a farmer near the Forks named Jean-Baptiste Roi was asked for a **deposition**. A deposition is a statement given in a trial. In this case, the person on trial was Colin Robertson, an HBC servant who stood accused of seizing Fort Gibraltar in 1816*.

Based on Jean-Baptiste Roi's description, can you reconstruct Fort Gibraltar? Look at all of the different buildings in his description and see where you might place them and what they might look like. Don't be afraid to look up some of these words in a dictionary if you need to! Feel free to sketch with pencil, use watercolours, create a 3-D model, use blocks, Lego, Play-doh, or even Minecraft!

"It was a wooden fort built with oak pickets split in two. There were houses inside. The boss's house, two houses of the men, a store, two sheds, a blacksmith shop, barns and stables, an ice-house, with a sentry box on top...They were large and inhabited; and in the bosses' house there were clerks and interpreters with their servants. The mens' house could contain 20 men each."



Here is an artist's representation of Fort Alexander (near Sagkeeng First Nation) in 1857. Original artist is J. Fleming. Toronto Public Library.

*In case you're curious, Colin Robertson was found guilty, but was acquitted. For more on him, visit http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/robertson_colin_7E.html

Sample questions

Here at Fort Gibraltar, we encourage everyone to be curious and ask lots of questions. But if you're not sure of what to ask, here are some sample questions to guide you!

Remember: some of these questions are for cabins that you might not be seeing on your trip. Try and keep your questions relevant to your specific visit!

About labour at the Fort

- 1) How long do you plan on working for the North West Company?
- 2) What do you eat? Do you have to go buy food from the store?
- 3) How many people can live in this cabin?
- 4) What do you eat? Is the food provided/cooked for you?
- 5) Where do you buy your clothes?
- 6) How much do you get paid?
- 7) How often do you work? Do you get weekends off?
- 8) How do you stay warm during the winter?

About Indigenous women's work at the Fort

- 1) What are some of the roles that Indigenous women played in the fur trade?
- 2) What are Indigenous women at Fort Gibraltar using to catch fish?
- 3) What kinds of fish are they catching in the Red River?
- 4) What does the word "pemmican" mean?
- 5) What methods of transportation are you using to travel?
- 6) How do you eat pemmican?
- 7) What languages did you speak growing up?
- 8) What is your family's relationship to the fur trade companies?

About business at the Fort

- 1) What company do you work for?
- 2) Why did this company choose the Forks as a trading place?
- 3) What was commerce like before you got here? How has it changed because of European commerce?
- 4) How do you and the Indigenous communities feel about the Selkirk Settlers being here?
- 5) Do farmers buy things from you? What trade goods do they buy?
- 6) How do you feel about working for the company? Are there any perks?
- 7) What's your relationship with the Indigenous traders?