

Mountain Man Artifact Kit

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Reminder: Please remember to return the kit by its due date since others are scheduled to receive it immediately following you.

Thank you!

Exploring the Kit

Help your students explore the artifacts, information, and activities packed inside this kit, and together you will discover some very exciting history! This kit is for students of all ages, but it is designed to be of most interest to students from fourth through eighth grades, the years in which Colorado history is most often taught. Younger children may require more help and guidance with some of the components of the kit, but there is something here for everyone.

Kit Components

The Mountain Man Kit is made up of eight components described in detail below:

1. **Teacher's Manual** – This guidebook contains information about each artifact of the kit. You will also find supplemental materials such as an overview of the history of the western fur trade, lesson plans to use with the kit, discussion questions, a song list of the music on the cassette tape, board game instructions, and a bibliography for teachers and students.
2. **Artifacts** – You will find a set of artifacts seated in foam in this kit. They are described in detail further in this booklet.
3. **Photo Packet** – In the photo packet, you will find images of artifacts, mountain men, and much more.
4. **Data CD** – Containing photos and descriptions of the artifacts, as well as copies of the photos provided in the photo packet, and any photos, graphics or handouts included in the teacher lesson plans.
5. **Audio CD** – To add another dimension to the kit, we have included a cassette tape with mountain man storytelling on one side. The other side contains typical American music of the early 1800's to depict the life the trappers left behind in the East, and American Indian music to show the sounds they heard in the West. A more detailed description of the music follows in this booklet.
6. **Board Game** – A game called "See You at the Rendezvous!" may be played at any time during the study of the fur trade, but serves especially well as a culminating activity, since it reinforces much of what appears elsewhere in the kit.
7. **Colorado Experience DVD** – This 28 minute documentary about Bent's Fort comes with vocabulary and discussion questions. (Use link)
8. **This Kit and the State Standards** – To learn what Colorado Academic standards this kit meets please see each individual lesson plan.

A Brief History of the Fur Trade

The mountain man and his part in western history has been shaded in myth. The image of the lone trapper taking his leave of “civilization” and daringly plunging into the wilderness to meet grizzly bears, harsh winters, mountain lions, and American Indians has sparked the imaginations of millions. Stripped of its romanticism, the fur trade was a hard business, and its labor force was as overworked, underpaid, and subject to hardships as any other nineteenth century occupation. Bent over by the strains of their livelihood, few trappers remained in the business past the age of forty.

The commerce for American furs and hides, including deer, otter, raccoon, muskrat, mink, wolf, fox, and beaver, lured Europeans to the Americas from the beginning. For the French in Canada to the English and Dutch in New York, the trade for furs was a driving force for relations between European and American Indians well into the colonial period and beyond. The fur trade also attracted a cosmopolitan mix of ethnic and cultural groups—French-Canadian, American Indian, African American, Hispanic, British, Irish, German, and Russian trappers and traders all worked side by side with Missourians, Ohioans, Pennsylvanians, and Virginians.

The peak of the Rocky Mountain fur trade ran for a very short period of time, from 1820 to 1840. This was the time that Americans became more interested in the politics and geography beyond the Mississippi River; it was a time of expansion and experimentation. Thomas Jefferson’s vision of an expanding republic sent Lewis and Clark on their exploration of the Far West to discover any resources that could be used to expand America’s economic base. Returning from their explorations, the captains encountered trapping brigades traveling along their back trail. Fur traders such as Manuel Lisa, Pierre and August Chouteau, and William Henry Ashley established strong mercantile traditions in towns such as St. Louis, Westport, and Independence, Missouri. This in turn led to the westward expansion of emigration, goods, and towns.

There were two overlapping production systems used in the western fur trade of the 1820s–1840s. One system was the Rocky Mountain Trapping System based on beaver pelts and a primary work force of European-American trappers, who met at a designated rendezvous each summer to exchange their pelts for supplies needed for the next trapping season. The second system was based on the Upper Missouri Fur Trade, utilizing bison robes as a main product, and employing a labor force of American Indians to gather and process the robes. The robes were then exchanged at one of the numerous trading posts established on the Missouri River and moved to St. Louis by water transportation. A variation of the Upper Missouri River system took place in Colorado on the Arkansas and South Platte rivers. Rival trading firms such as Bent, St. Vrain, and Company; Vasquez and Sublette; and the American Fur Trading Company built competing forts to lure away the commerce of the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

Of those who decided to enter the fur trade business, many failed in their attempts to garner profits. However, those with enough experience, ability, and luck were often able to make a decent living. It must be kept in mind that this was a hardscrabble business. Acquiring furs and transporting them to eastern markets presented a logistical nightmare. Moving pack trains of supplies into the mountains,

and returning with bales of furs, was an incredible task. The thousand-mile trek through inhospitable western plains, rugged mountain passes, and lands claimed by occasionally unfriendly American Indians often invited tragedy.

Another important economic dynamic of the fur trade was the depletion of the beaver which resulted from overharvesting. It has long been a tradition to view the environment as if resources were unlimited, and many business-minded merchants and trappers were determined to extract any resource that was easily exploitable. This attitude of short-term exploitation flourished during the fur trade and persisted after 1840, as the focus shifted from furs to minerals, timber, grass, land, and water. Over trapping led to the virtual extermination of the beavers; their exhaustion and the simultaneous decline in the popularity of beaver fur hats, replaced by fashionable silk ones, brought an end to an era.

As they gathered furs, the trappers worked hand-in-hand, and sometimes competed, with American Indian tribes who had their own cultural traditions and distinct points of view. On the western plains and Rocky Mountains, the two very different cultures exchanged trade goods, but also ideas. As they came together in this wilderness, each culture would have to adapt to the other's presence.

These two very different cultural legacies collided on the western frontier. Yet each accepted innovations from the other which suited their needs. The traders adopted American Indian foods, clothing, language, and geographic knowledge. Trappers and traders frequently took native wives, both to secure a helpmate and to solidify trading relations with specific tribes. The American Indians, in turn, welcomed manufactured trade goods such as iron awls and pots, beads, guns, and knives. Plains Indians expanded their production of bison robes to meet the new demands. In the long run, the exchange of robes for manufactured goods created a one-sided trade relationship. Many American Indians became dependent upon European-American trade goods, while others fought with each other for control of the hunting grounds. The effects of disease introduced by the European Americans seriously strained their social and cultural traditions. The strains created by the fur trade sometimes led to brief but violent conflict. Yet the traders and American Indians who exchanged goods and ideas had to meet on peaceful terms in order for the process to take place.

The fur trade and the knowledge exchanged between these two cultures would also lead to further settlement of the West. By the end of the fur trade era, the American population was ready to move west in search of new opportunities. Due to the fur trade, the migrating pioneers ventured into a landscape that was well charted, and one about which a great deal was known. Military explorers and settlers alike hired retired trappers and traders to guide them to their Western destinations. One of the major achievements of the fur trade was the conversion of the trapper's geographic knowledge, much of which was learned from various American Indian tribes, onto maps. In this sense, the trappers and traders of the 1820s and 1830s represented the vanguard of the great western migrations of the 1840s and beyond.

Artifact Description and Photographs

The descriptions that follow are meant to provide you with more information about the objects found in the Mountain Man case. **The photographs of the artifacts may not match the actual artifacts found in your case.** The photos are included to help you identify which artifact is being described.



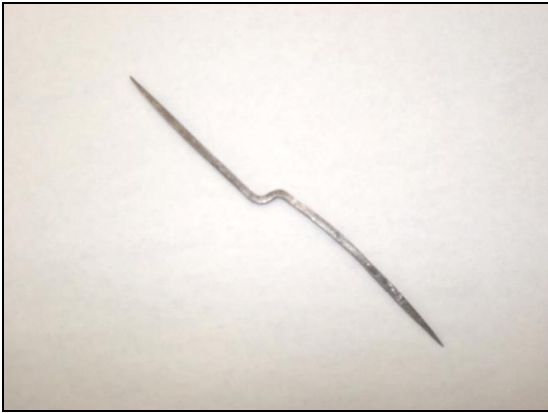
Leather pouch with quillwork design

Porcupine quill embroidery was highly developed among many of the Plains Indian tribes that the trappers and traders encountered as they moved westward across the continent. This art form was a reflection of how the American Indians used their surrounding environment for ceremonial, spiritual, and everyday purposes. They often decorated clothing, pipe bags, tipis, and horse gear with various designs and symbols made of flattened and dyed quills.



Trade beads

Venetian glass trade beads came in a myriad of colors, styles, and sizes, and for centuries had been used by Europeans for many purposes, from ornamentation to money. When glass trade beads reached the American continent, their polish and luster made them favorites among the Native Americans, preferred above beads of shells, bone, stone, and clay. They learned to replace quillwork with beads, while continuing to hold on to the geometric designs and forms that expressed their cultural backgrounds. Chevron beads, bugle beads, seed beads, and pigeon beads were but a few of the most popular, and they fell in and out of fashion over time.



Awl

A trapper's iron awl was indispensable for sewing garments, cleaning his rifle, or trading with the American Indian tribes who used awls for much their daily sewing or lacing. Awls were mostly used to punch holes in leather so that it could be sewn together. Awls were shipped by the manufacturer to St. Louis and were distributed by traders without handles. A shaped and smoothed piece of deer antler was usually affixed by the owner for easier handling.



Flints and Steel

Also known as "fire steels", these objects were of prime importance in the American Indian trade. Although they were very inexpensive, they represented an important technological innovation over traditional fire-making techniques. Trappers working in the wilderness also found this tool to be extremely valuable. A slicing blow with the shaped steel against a small piece of flint caused sparks to fly and gave life to fire.



Ball bag

This specialized little hard leather bag added to the efficiency of loading and firing a rifle. Lead balls could be located and loaded when needed.



Knife

One of the trapper's most essential tools, the knife helped him kill and skin animals for food and for their pelts. The logo of J. Russell and Co./Green River Works of Massachusetts, stamped on the blade of many a mountain man's knife, became an icon of the western fur trade. There was something very personal about a trapper's favorite knife, and he often named it or endowed it with a personality. An attachment like this makes sense when one considers the importance of such a tool in the wilderness.



Tomahawk

Hand-forged, iron ax heads were of great importance to Americans conquering the wilderness. Essential for felling trees to use as firewood and shelter, as well as a valuable weapon, this was a heavily traded item. A blacksmith would make a trade ax by taking a single, elongated flat plate of iron and hammering out one end while hot. He would then wrap the piece of iron around a pattern to form the eye of the ax for the wooden handle. The blade was then ground to sharpness.

American Indian tribes valued cloth for clothing and blankets.



Possibles Bag

A very important piece of the trapper's gear, the possibles bag was used for the storage of any number of items, from flints and steels, to the castoreum box, awls, and other tools used in daily trapping life.



Trade cloth

The Rocky Mountain fur trade era coincided with America's first industrial revolution—which centered on the expansion of steam operated textile mills. Trappers working in an unpredictable and harsh wilderness mostly used inexpensive wool cloth to fashion work shirts and other clothing.



Trade Silver

European trade silver pieces entered North America over one hundred years before the Rocky Mountain fur trade began. First bought by early traders and missionaries, silver work soon attracted the eyes of many Native Americans. Perhaps exchanged between the two cultures as a sign of friendship, American Indians soon demanded silver pieces as part of the trading process. Silversmiths in Europe and the United States quickly hammered out bar silver to create pieces to supply native demands. As time went on, Native Americans began requesting specific silver ornaments that signified culturally-specific ideas. Brooches or crosses might symbolize bravery, or a display of wealth, or perhaps, authority, but they did not necessarily mean to the American Indians what they meant to Euro-Americans. A Jesuit style cross of Lorraine, for instance, did not necessarily have Christian religious significance to Native Americans. Many of the silver pieces in animal shapes, such as beavers, turtles, fishes, and foxes, became symbols used by American Indians to reflect their respect for the animals they hunted.



Powder horn and Powder Measure

Slung by a strap across his shoulder, the mountain man's powder horn was another essential piece of his gear. It was often made from a steer horn, but even more frequently of a smaller, black, bison horn. The powder horn was a handy way to keep gunpowder dry, and the powder measure made sure that just the right amount was used.



Tin Cup

While it wasn't critical that a trapper have a tin cup, it certainly came in handy for drinking coffee or tea or when another container was needed.



Pipe

Not every trapper owned a pipe, but clay pipes such as this one were cheap and popular at the time. Traders transported hundreds of the fragile pipes to rendezvous in barrels packed with sawdust. Tobacco represented a small luxury in otherwise harsh conditions and was also a popular trade item with American Indians.



Cards

This reproduction 1830's deck of cards looks much like the playing cards that would have been used by the mountain men. Since they were small and easy to carry, cards were carried by many of the trappers to help pass the time of day and to enjoy with their companions.



Castoreum

Castoreum, a substance from a gland near the base of the beaver's tail, was used by the trapper as bait. It was smeared on a willow switch that he placed by the trap, and although the scent in open air was not discernable to humans, it was recognizable by the beaver at a distance.



Beaver Pelt (Beaver Plew)

This beaver pelt is only a partial beaver skin. You might notice that there are two lengths of fur on the pelt. The longer more coarse hair was removed by the hat-maker or hatter to reveal the shorter-softer fur. The hat-maker used mercury in the procedure to remove the longer hair and during the process the mercury was absorbed into the hatter's hands. Enough exposure to mercury very often made hat-makers go "mad" hence we get the term "mad as a hatter" and the character of the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Lesson Plans

Are you on the Right Track?

Lupton's Letters

Working like a Beaver

The States of the Union

To Trap or Not to Trap

During My Life

Amazing Animals

That's the Best Invention since Sliced Bread!

The Price is Right!

Are You on the Right Track?

Standards: History: 4.1
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 3; 4
Science 1; 3

Materials: A copy of this card
Pencil/Pen

Objective: To understand why animals have differently shaped feet and why it is important for their survival.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

In order to survive trappers had to know what footprint or track belonged to which animal. Know which animal each track belonged to was important to the Mountain Man successfully trapping beaver for trade and for him to find his next meal. The trapper didn't want to go hunting a deer only to find out it's a bear!

During the Fur Trade there were no grocery stores or mercantile stores in the west. The forts were not close by nor were there very many of them. When their supplies from the rendezvous ran out, the only food and drink they consumed was what they could find for themselves. They sometimes ate the beavers they trapped and killed if they were desperate for food, but they claimed that the only part that was any good was his tail which they would boil.

For the trapper, there were times of plenty and times of near starvation depending on how close they were to buffalo and other animals. Most mountain men loved the taste of buffalo meat and fat and feasted to their heart's content when one was killed. The "hump ribs," or the shoulder meat, was especially well liked, but they also hungrily eyed the bone marrow, intestines, and liver which they liked to eat raw. Another delicacy for the trapper was the buffalo tongue. This was also well liked by the people in the East, and thousands of tongues each year were packed in salt to keep them fresh, and sent back to the large cities.

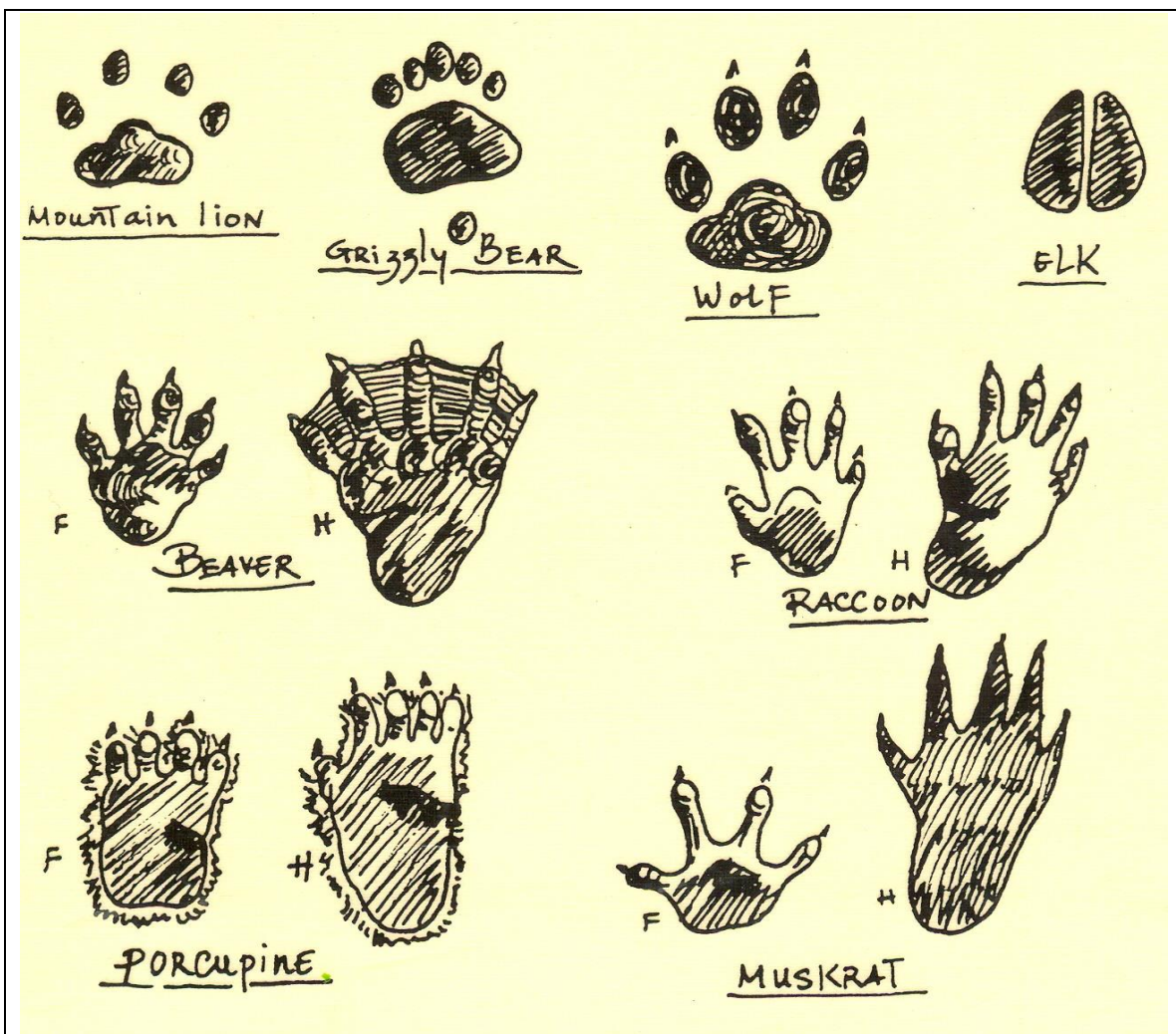
If they were getting ready to travel a long way through an area with little game, the mountain men would cut meat into thin slices and dry them in the sun to preserve them. They called this "mekkin' meat;" we know it as jerky. Another way to preserve meat was to make pemmican out of it. Pemmican is dried meat that is pounded into a powder, mixed with hot fat and dried fruits or berries that were pressed into a loaf or small cakes. The Mountain Men learned to make pemmican from the Native Americans they traded with.

There were times, though, when the trappers ran out of food or drink, and they had to make do with anything they could put their hands on. It sometimes got so bad that they would eat their dogs, moccasins, or anything else made of leather, or even the ears of their mules!

Very rarely, trappers were lucky enough to be near a fort that Indians such as the Mandan and Arikara were supplying with corn, beans, and squash. Indians would come to the fort and exchange their corn, one bushel equaling a dollar's worth of goods. Fort Union even had a small garden of its own, where they raised garden peas, radishes, potatoes, beets, and turnips.

Procedure: One of the skills of the mountain man found most necessary was his ability to identify different animal tracks. This helped him in tracking animals when hunting and collecting furs, and in avoiding the more dangerous animals. Drawn below are footprints of several different animals that a trapper might run across.

1. Using the animal prints below, have students speculate as to why the animals have different shaped feet.
2. In small groups, have students research why the animals feet are shaped differently.
3. Have the students report out to the rest of the class as to why the shape foot helps that animal survive (i.e. sharp claws for predators; webbed feet for swimmers, etc...).



Lupton's Letter

Standards: Geography: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 4.3; 6.1
History: 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 4.2; 4.3
Mathematics: 5; 6
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6

Materials: pencil/pen, copies of Lupton's Letter, map of Colorado, map of U.S.

Objective: Students analyze a primary historical source, create and justify a response, and use maps to trace the journey of the document.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

By the time forts started to spring up in the West, it was clear that the white man had more on his mind than just passing through the area. Now he was showing that he meant to stay. He was willing to work hard and defend himself and his rights to trade behind the walls of his fort.

In the early 1830's, beavers were just starting to become harder to find, and the trade of buffalo robes was beginning to pick up. At the same time, the forts were replacing the rendezvous as the most important places to trade. For one thing, the fort was open all year round, and it was always in the same place, so it was easy to find by all. In addition, the heavy, bulky buffalo robes were easier to manage at the forts than at the rendezvous.

The Indians' importance in the fur trade was growing, too, because it was the Indians who traded most of the buffalo skins, not the trappers. They didn't bring in as many as they could kill, but only as many as the Indian women could tan. Thirty hides per year was a lot for one woman to prepare.

Fort after fort began to appear in the mountain and plains area, among them some names you may recognize: Fort Lupton, Fort Union, Fort Vasquez, Fort Hall, Fort St. Vrain, and Bent's Fort. Many tribes would arrive at the posts eager to trade their buffalo robes for beads, awls, looking glasses, tobacco, knives, guns, ammunition, combs, battleaxes, and other things. The traders at the forts made a huge profit, as you might expect, because they traded items of little worth for the robes which they could sell for much more money. Of course, Indians profited too—trading plentiful buffalo robes for hard-to-acquire manufactured goods.

In 1833, Charles and William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain, with the consultation of Chief Yellow Wolf, a Southern Cheyenne Indian, chose the site for their trading post, 150 miles north of Taos, on the Santa Fe Trail, just north of the Arkansas River. The Arkansas River was the border between the US and Mexico. Bent's Fort is near what is known today as La Junta, Colorado. It was also near a Cheyenne winter camp site, which was good from Yellow Wolf's point of view since his people were eager for trade goods.

When it was finished, Bent's Fort was the largest of all the forts in the mountain-plains region. There were twenty-six apartments at the post, all built around a central plaza, or "placita," where dances were held, and where the fur presses were located. There was a large dining room for guests, complete with china, silver, and white tablecloths. The fort even boasted a billiards room. Outside the fort were an ice house, a trash dump, a burial ground, and a racetrack.

The partners split up responsibilities for keeping the post operational. Charles Bent managed the company's business in St. Louis and supervised caravans as they traveled down the Santa Fe Trail. Ceran St. Vrain ran the company's stores in New Mexico, while William Bent proved to have the most skill at dealing with their Plains Indian customers. Bent married Owl Woman, the daughter of a Southern Cheyenne spiritual leader. For sixteen years, William ran the fort and oversaw all the employees and the business transactions.

From the watchtower over the main gate, it was easy to see who was approaching the fort. Some of the tribes that came to trade were the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Pawnee, Apache, and Ute. Scholars, explorers, writers, artists, engineers, drovers, and of course, mountain men also visited the fort. Kit Carson once worked as a hunter for the fort, and other visitors included John C. Frémont, Francis Parkman, diarist Susan Shelby Macgoffin, Jim Beckwourth, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Baker, Jim Bridger, and "Uncle Dick" Wooten.

The fort was not only a place for trade, but was also a place to dance, refit, and socialize after a long journey on the Santa Fe Trail.

Procedure: Lancaster P. Lupton wrote a letter asking the President of the United States for an appointment as an Indian Agent on the West Coast. Lupton was a former soldier and western fur trader who established a trading post named after him (Ft. Lupton) near the South Platte River in Colorado. Despite his military experience, Lupton did not receive the appointment. In 1847, he moved to Hardscrabble, Colorado, near Pueblo, where he started a farm. He had previously married a Cheyenne woman, and together they had eight children. During the Gold Rush of 1849, Lupton moved to California to test his luck at mining. He settled in California and died there in 1885.

1. Read the letter written by Lupton asking the President of the United States for a military appointment on the West Coast. If you are unable to read his handwriting, look at the typed transcript of the letter.
2. Have the students do some quick research and find out who the President of the United States was at the time that the letter was written.
3. While the students are pretending to be the President, have them write a return letter to Lupton explaining whether or not they decided to appoint him as an Indian Agent.
4. Have the students research which American Indian tribes Lupton could have been assigned to work with in California in 1846 had he received the assignment?
5. On a map of Colorado, have students locate Ft. Lupton. Explain that communication was very slow and tedious process in the United States, and the rest of the world, in 1846. Because the mail was sent via wagon train which covered 10-15 miles per day, how long would Lupton's letter have taken to get to Washington D.C.?
 - a. The distance from Ft. Lupton to Washington D.C. is approximately 1,670 miles. (Use Ft. Lupton even though the letter was sent from Bent's Fort)
6. On a map of the U.S. have students decide what trail the letter probably took on its journey to the capital city (i.e. The Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, etc...).

Bent's Fort Arkansas No 8th 1846
To the President of the U. S.

Sir I respectfully request that I may be appointed Indian Agent at some of the agencies that will probably be formed in Oregon or California.

In making this request it is proper to state the grounds upon which I hope my application may meet with success - While in the U. S. Army I had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with Indian character at Forts. Johnson, Gibson and Larnworth. Since I left the Army in 1836, I have spent the greater part of my time in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, almost constantly in communication with the different tribes of Indians in that region -

Educated as I was for the Army, and having served many years on the extreme Western frontier, I of course have no profession - The energies of my youth and early manhood - the time usually spent by others in learning how to live - have been devoted to the service of my Country.

I do not ask for the office for the sake of the office - I ask it as a means of subsistence

The accompanying testimonials were procured with a view of being restored to the Army, but I deem them equally applicable in the present instance, as they fully show, who I am, what my qualifications are, and what my former services have been.

I have the honor to be Sir

Very Respectfully

Your Obedt. Servt.

S. P. Lepton

Transcript of letter dated 1846
From Lancaster Lupton to the President of the United States

Bent's Fort Arkansas [River] November 8th, 1846

To the President of the U.S.

Sir, I respectfully request that I may be appointed Indian Agent at some of the agencies that will probably be formed in Oregon or California.

In making this request it is proper to state the grounds upon which I hope my application may meet with success – while in the U.S. Army I had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with Indian character at Forts Towson, Gibson, and Leavenworth. Since I left the Army in 1836 I have spent the greater part of my time in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, almost constantly in communication with the different tribes of Indians in that region.

Educated as I was for the Army, and having served many years on the extreme western frontier I of course have no profession – the energies of my youth and early manhood – the time usually spent by others in learning how to live – have been devoted to the service of my Country. I do not ask for the office for the sake of office. I ask as a means of existence.

The accompanying testimonials were proven with a view of having restored to the Army but I deem them equally applicable in the present instance, as they fully show, who I am, what my qualifications are and what my former services have been.

I have the honor to be his

Very Respectfully
Your Able Servant

L. P. Lupton

Working like a Beaver

Standards: History: 2.3
Reading & Writing: 1; 4; 5
Science: 3

Materials: Drawing paper; colored pencils/markers; internet access

Objective: Students will understand important aspects of the beaver's life cycle.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

Just what was this little animal like that the mountain men chased all over the mountains year after year? The word "beaver" itself comes from an ancient Sanskrit word meaning "big" and "brown." And they were big at one time, or at least their ancestors were. A million years ago, they were giant six-foot-long, dam-building animals that could weigh 700 pounds!

Today, beavers measure about four feet from nose to tip of tail, and they weigh from 30 to 50 pounds. In the wild, they normally live about twelve years, but tame ones have stayed alive as long as nineteen years. One of the most curious things about beavers is that they keep growing all of their lives!

Beavers live in colonies made up of six to twelve family members, and the whole family joins together to build and repair their dams. The only reason they even build dams is to flood an area with trees nearby so that they can stay in the water and still swim to their favorite food, tree bark. Beavers are built for cutting down trees. They have front paws that can dig and grip, a flat tail that helps prop them up as they eat, and three inch long chisel-like incisor teeth, two on the top and three on the bottom to cut through wood.

After felling a tree, the beaver must then cut it into lengths that are not too heavy to haul by his teeth through the water to his dam. Luckily, the beaver has lips that close tightly behind his teeth so that he doesn't drown as he tows the logs. He also has transparent eyelids and flaps of skin to seal off his nose and ears when he's under water. He uses his webbed hind feet to push himself through the water at about five miles per hour, and he has extra-large lungs and liver that allows him to stay under water for fifteen minutes.

Beavers build lodges in their dams to live in. They pile limbs and twigs on top to make a solid pile of brush from five to seven feet tall. Then, they swim up through an underwater tunnel and eat their way into their cozy home. They also make a hole in the top to let in fresh air. Later, they cover the outside with a thick layer of mud, and when it freezes, it gets very hard.

Beavers usually have litters of two to six kits sometime between March and June. The kits weigh less than a pound at birth, and they are so at home in the water that they may follow their mothers into a lake or stream before their first day is over! By the time the kits are two years old, the parents are normally ready to have a second litter, so they run off the two year olds to make room for new babies.

As the young beavers leave home, they try to attract mates so that they can start colonies of their own. They scoop up small piles of earth and then leave a few drops of oil, called castoreum, on them. Castoreum is made in two small oil glands near the

beaver's tail. When other beaver come across the scent, they can tell whether it made by a male or female, and which direction the beaver passed. Once they find mates, they keep the same ones for life.

A normal colony of beavers cuts down over 1,000 trees per year. They eat what they need and then use the rest of wood to build their dams and lodges. When they have taken care of all the trees in one area, they move off to find a new home.

Procedure:

1. Have students fold a large sheet of drawing paper in half, and on the front page write the title "The Life and Times of the Beaver." Students may decorate the title page any way they wish.
2. Instructor will read or have students read aloud the information "A Beaver's Life" included at the end of this lesson plan.
3. Have students find pictures of beavers online or in the library. Students should have a picture of each of the following:
 - A prehistoric ancestor of the beaver next to a modern-day beaver.
 - A beaver colony eating bark, cutting down trees, dragging them to the water, or building a dam.
 - A beaver lodge.
 - A mother beaver taking her kits for a swim.
4. Have the students paste/tape the pictures they have found on to the inside pages of "The Life and Times of the Beaver."
5. On the back page have the students write the question and answers (are in the information from "A Beaver's Life") to the following questions:
 - A. Being a beaver, I eat lots of...?
 - B. My beaver ancestors could weigh up to this many pounds?
 - C. My paws are good for digging, my teeth can cut through the toughest wood, but I use my tail for...?
 - D. These two organs are very large in me and that allows me to stay under water for 15 minutes, what are those two organs?
 - E. During the winter I'm not very busy and I usually stay in my...?
 - F. When we have kits (or babies) there are how many in a litter?
 - G. The oil I leave on the ground to attract a mate is called...? When my whole colony works its hardest, we can cut down more than this number of trees per year...



For your quick reference here are the answers for the above questions:

- A. bark
- B. 700 lbs.
- C. Help prop me up as I eat and to slap on the water to alert others when I sense danger
- D. Lungs and liver
- E. Lodge
- F. One to five
- G. Castoreum
- H. 1,000 trees

A Beaver's Life

Just what was little animal like that the mountain men chased all over the mountains year after year? The word “beaver” itself comes from an ancient Sanskrit word meaning “big” and “brown.” And they were big at one time, or at least their ancestors were. A million years ago, they were giant six-foot-long, dam-building animals that could weigh 700 pounds! Today, beavers measure about four feet from nose to tip of tail, and they weigh from 30 to 50 pounds. In the wild, they normally live about twelve years, but tame ones have stayed alive as long as nineteen years. One of the most curious things about beavers is that they keep growing all of their lives! Beavers live in colonies made up of six to twelve family members, and the whole family joins together to build and repair their dams. The only reason they even build dams is to flood an area with trees nearby so that they can stay in the water and still swim to their favorite food, tree bark. Beavers are built for cutting down trees. They have front paws that can dig and grip, a flat tail that helps prop them up as they eat, and three inch long chisel-like incisor teeth, two on the top and three on the bottom to cut through wood.

After felling a tree, the beaver must then cut it into lengths that are not too heavy to haul by his teeth through the water to his dam. Luckily, the beaver has lips that close tightly behind his teeth so that he doesn't drown as he tows the logs. He also has transparent eyelids and flaps of skin to seal off his nose and ears when he's under water. He uses his webbed hind feet to push himself through the water at about five miles per hour, and he has extra-large lungs and liver that allows him to stay under water for fifteen minutes.

During the winter, beaver build lodges in their dams to live in. They pile limbs and twigs on top to make a solid pile of brush from five to seven feet tall. Then, they swim up through an underwater tunnel and eat their way into their cozy home. They also make a hole in the top to let in fresh air. Later, they cover the outside with a thick layer of mud, and when it freezes, it gets very hard.

Beavers usually have litters of two to six kits sometime between March and June. The kits weigh less than a pound at birth, and they are so at home in the water that they may follow their mothers into a lake or stream before their first day is over! By the time the kits are two years old, the parents are normally ready to have a second litter, so they run off the two year olds to make room for new babies.

As the young beavers leave home, they try to attract mates so that they can start colonies of their own. They scoop up small piles of earth and then leave a few drops of oil, called castoreum, on them. Castoreum is made in two small oil glands near the beaver's anus. Once they find mates, they keep the same ones for life.

A normal colony of beavers cuts down over 1,000 trees per year. They eat what they need and what they need and then use the rest of wood to build their dams and lodges. When they have taken care of all the trees in one area, they move off to find a new home.

The States of the Union

Standards: Economics: 1.1
Geography: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.2; 4.1; 4.4; 4.5; 6.1
History: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 3.1; 3.2; 4.2
Reading & Writing: 1; 4; 5

Materials: Crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Regular pen/pencil
Copies of U.S. map
Access to the Internet or resources in the library

Objective: Students will understand how and why the United States territory grew during the 1800's and how the Fur Trade had an effect on growth.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

Exploring a land that few of their countrymen had dared enter before them, the mountain men and the tales of their adventures quickly became a source of wonder in the east. Only small bits of news about the West had trickled through to Americans before the trappers arrived, so they still imagined it to be a dark, forbidding country.

Lewis and Clark had seen parts of the West when they made their expedition to the Oregon area in the first years of the 1800's, and they described it as decidedly uninviting. Zebulon Pike followed in 1810, calling the land a desert; and in 1823, Major Stephen Long also traveled through the area and claimed that it was not a place for "civilized" men to live. Soon, the West became known as "The Great American Desert" – hardly a name that would make anyone want to move there.

Thanks to the trappers, though, the truth came out. They were the first group of European Americans to explore the whole area and to describe both its harshness and future promise. They marked out routes of travel into this vast area along older Indian trails, and it would be the trappers who would eventually guide the U.S. military into New Mexico and the Rocky Mountains.

Later still, it would be their job to escort early wagon trains to Oregon and California, and to guide government exploring parties through the West, not only showing them where to go, but also helping them negotiate with the Indians. Because the mountain men dared to explore this land and tell about its wonders, more and more people were feeling an urge to see it for themselves, and it wouldn't be long before the rush was on.

In the early years of the 1800s, there were two different points of view in the East about moving the nation westward. To some people, such as Thomas Jefferson, there was no question that the United States should expand. They were very much in favor of the fur trade since they understood that this was the first way to explore the new area. They had also supported the Lewis and Clark expedition and were eager to learn more about their discoveries.

For others, there was a concern about adding more new states to the Union. They pointed to Zebulon Pike's 1810 report which described the West as a desert and an uninviting place to live, and they said we were better off developing trade across the Atlantic. But whatever their views, it would have been almost impossible to hold the

country back. There was an overall urge to move ever westward—for new opportunities and to explore the unknown.

The United States government at first tried to strictly regulate the fur trade. Between 1796 and 1822, legal trade with Indians took place at government-sanctioned “factories,” in part to prevent the exploitation of Indians by unscrupulous traders. As the years passed, private fur companies became very successful. Much of the profits poured into New York City, where John Jacob Astor dominated the western fur market, and St. Louis.

The fur trade helped extend American territorial claims to the rest of the continent. In 1818, the United States and Great Britain agreed on a boundary with Canada. They also agreed to jointly occupy Oregon Territory. The United States used the fur trade as one means of keeping the British economic interests out of the American West. Congress voted to limit the Indian trade to American citizens only. The British would have to leave the fur business in the American West to the United States.

Procedure: The western half of the United States was explored and mapped partly because of the fur trade. The maps created by mountain men and the U.S. Army made it easier for settlers to move to the western territories. Once a territory had a population of 60,000 or more its citizens could apply for statehood. People moved west for many reasons but one of the most popular was Manifest Destiny, the belief that the United States had the right and the duty to occupy all of North America and to spread democracy. The fur trade ended in 1840 and by 1848 the country had moved as far west as the Pacific Ocean.

1. Have students research when each state entered the Union.
2. On the map provided have students fill in the name of each state and the year that each one was admitted to the Union.
3. Using a yellow crayon, marker or colored pencil, have students color in the states that joined the Union before the start of the western fur trade, 1787–1819.
4. Have students use orange to color the states that were admitted during and a little after the fur trade, 1820-1850.
5. The states that joined the union after 1850 should be colored in red.
6. Now that the map is colored in have students discuss the pattern of settlement. For example: Why did California become a state before Colorado? Why were people moving west? Why didn't they stay in the East? Etc.

Teacher Quick Reference:

1. Delaware – 1787
2. Pennsylvania – 1787
3. New Jersey – 1787
4. Georgia – 1788
5. Connecticut – 1788
6. Massachusetts – 1788
7. Maryland – 1788
8. South Carolina – 1788
9. New Hampshire – 1788
10. Virginia – 1788
11. New York – 1788
12. North Carolina – 1789
13. Rhode Island – 1790
14. Vermont – 1791
15. Kentucky – 1792
16. Tennessee – 1796

17. Ohio – 1803
18. Louisiana – 1812
19. Indiana – 1816
20. Mississippi – 1817
21. Illinois - 1818
22. Alabama – 1819
23. Maine – 1820
24. Missouri – 1821
25. Arkansas – 1836
26. Michigan – 1837
27. Florida – 1845
28. Texas – 1845
29. Iowa – 1846
30. Wisconsin – 1848
31. California – 1850
32. Minnesota – 1858
33. Oregon – 1859
34. Kansas – 1861

35. West Virginia – 1863
36. Nevada – 1864
37. Nebraska – 1867
38. Colorado – 1876
39. North Dakota – 1889
40. South Dakota – 1889
41. Montana – 1889
42. Washington – 1889
43. Idaho – 1890
44. Wyoming – 1890
45. Utah – 1896
46. Oklahoma – 1907
47. New Mexico – 1912
48. Arizona -1912
49. Alaska - 1959
50. Hawaii - 1959



To Trap or Not To Trap

Standards: Economics: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.1; 2.2; 3.1
History: 1.3; 2.3; 3.1; 4.2; 4.3
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5
Science: 4

Materials: Access to internet or library resources
Pencils/pens; writing paper
Copies of “Journey of a Pelt” worksheet

Objective: Students will understand the effects of the trapping industry on the environment.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

Many trappers found that if they joined together to form fur trade companies, they could make more money than they could on their own. The companies had a big effect on the fur trade in many ways. It was one company’s idea to have the rendezvous instead of forts for trading. Another company helped to drive foreign fur trade competition from the United States. Listed below are some of the major fur companies of the Rocky Mountain area:

Missouri Fur Company In 1807, Manuel Lisa led the first U.S. trapping expedition up the Missouri River. He found the areas so rich in beaver that only five years later he and the prominent Chouteau family from St. Louis set up the Missouri Fur Company. The company made a profit, but it didn’t do as well as many of the others.

American Fur Company Started in 1808 by John Jacob Astor, this company controlled the Great Lakes trade and then expanded to the Oregon area where Astor opened a new post, called Astoria. Astor became quite wealthy from the fur trade. He competed fiercely with the British companies such as the Hudson’s Bay Co., and finally convinced the U.S. Congress to pass an act saying that foreign fur companies could no longer trap in the United States.

Rocky Mountain Fur Company William H. Ashley started this company in 1822 when its first expedition left St. Louis and spent two years gathering beaver pelts. Many trappers whose names you might recognize worked for this company: Jim Bridger, Hugh Glass, Jedediah Smith, and William Sublette. Four years later, Ashley decided to sell the company to Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, and David Jackson, and they did well with it, though not as well as Ashley.

By the 1830s there were rumors that there was a lot of money to be made in the fur trade. Company after company was formed, but most were not well run, and they either fell apart or were taken over by the large, successful businesses.

St. Louis was the major collecting point for the furs trapped west of the Missouri River. From here, they were sent to New York by one of three ways:

1. By steamboat to New Orleans and then by sea to New York.
2. By steamboat up the Ohio River to Pittsburgh and then by barge on the Pennsylvania Canal to the coast.
3. Up the Ohio River to Buffalo by the Ohio Canal and then on to the Erie Canal to New York.

The Rocky Mountain area started being trapped in the 1820s, but by the end of the 1830s there weren’t many beaver left. Virtually every river valley had been explored and it

wasn't uncommon for one company to bring in as many as sixty beavers in one morning. There was no way for the beavers to reproduce quickly enough to make up for such a loss in their numbers. In just twenty years, the trappers had killed almost all of them.

Just as fate would have it, though, at the same time the beaver supply ran out, the fashion in hats changed, and beaver fur was no longer needed. No one knows for sure just what caused the change in styles, but the common belief is that in 1840, a French duke lost his beaver top hat while traveling in China. And since there were no beavers available to use to make another hat, he had it made of silk, instead. When he got back home, the silk hat became the rage, and everyone wanted one of those instead of the old beaver type. The new silk hat brought the fur trade to an end.

Procedure:

1. Instructor will divide the class into thirds. One-third will be trappers in the 1830s. The second third will be environmentalists from the present. And the last third of the class will serve as judges for the debate.
2. The environmentalists and the trappers will debate the following topic: Should trapping be banned in the United States?
3. Each team will have one class period to research their point of view, and to plan their strategies for the debate. The last third who will be the judges will work on the "Journey of a Pelt" worksheet on the next page. Don't forget to let the students (especially the trappers) know that they want to point out the benefits that come from their point of view.
4. During the next class period the two groups of students will debate the issue. The instructor will act as mediator during the debate.
6. The final third of the class will come to a decision based on the strength of the debaters' arguments; they will have a full class period to come to their decision. While they are deciding the other two-thirds of the class will work on the "Journey of a Pelt" worksheet. Once they have reached their conclusions they will defend their decision to the rest of the class. The side with the most votes wins!
7. **Teacher key to "Journey of a Pelt": 3, 10, 7, 12, 6, 8, 9, 4, 2, 5, 11, 1**



Name: _____

Date: _____

Journey of a Pelt Worksheet

Instructions: Listed below are all the steps that take place in trapping a beaver, from the mountain man just beginning his journey, to the products made from the fur. The steps below are not in the correct order, so read through them carefully, and re-number them in the correct order from first to last. (Hint: the first step is number 3)

1. _____ The top hat purchased for his uncle is given back to the nephew for sentimental reasons when the uncle passes away. The year is 1848, and the nephew who now trades silk hats remembers when beaver hats were in fashion.
2. _____ Hundreds of bundles of beaver and buffalo skins, along with salted buffalo tongues, arrive on schedule in St. Louis. Busy merchants prepare to ship them to New York for profits.
3. 1 A trapper leaves his job as a St. Louis blacksmith to go west with a party of Rocky Mountain Fur Company employees. He will try his luck in the American fur trade.
4. _____ The pelts are pressed flat and then bundled for shipping down the Missouri River on the steamboat *Yellowstone*.
5. _____ The pelts make their long journey from the St. Louis merchants to New York “haberdashers” where hat makers clean the fur and make felt from it.
6. _____ The beaver pelts are skinned and cleaned by the trapper with a Green River knife.
7. _____ The trapper takes six traps down to a slower branch of the Green River and baits aspen sticks with castoreum scent.
8. _____ The beaver skins are stretched and tied with willow hoops for curing.
9. _____ The trapper trades his cured pelts at Fort Union for two Green River knives, one axe, a pound of coffee, and a pint of watered-down whiskey.
10. _____ The trapper mixes up his own special recipe of castoreum and stores it in a small wooden box he bought in St. Louis.
11. _____ Beaver “toppers” are shipped to the coast of France where a merchant buys one of the finest for his favorite uncle.
12. _____ The trapper returns to the stream to check the traps he set yesterday. He is happy to find that four of the six traps have caught beaver.

During My Life

Standards: History: 1.1; 1.2; 2.1
Mathematics: 1; 3; 5; 6
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 4; 5

Materials: Internet or library access
8 ½" x 14" Paper
Colored pencils/markers/crayons, ruler, regular pencil, glue (optional)
Copies of "During My Life" worksheet

Objective: Students will understand the time period during which the mountain man lived by comparing the life of one mountain man with world events.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

Most trappers and traders in the Rocky Mountain area came here from St. Louis, but they were men from very different circumstances. Some were sons of wealthy European or American parents, but most were from poor, illiterate families. Jedediah Smith and Ceran St. Vrain were both successful, but their backgrounds were very different indeed.

Jedediah Strong Smith would know the wilderness from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean and from Mexico to Canada by the end of the fur trade. He would have seen more of the west than Lewis and Clark. But he was not a very well educated man. When he was 15 and growing up in Pennsylvania, a country doctor taught him to read, write, and do math. The doctor even gave him Lewis and Clark's book which sparked his interest in the West, but that was all the education he had.

Jed was one of twelve children in a poor family, but he had several traits that would help make him a success. He was quiet and modest, courageous, bright, and an energetic leader. He entered the West, an unknown land, with his rifle and the clothes he wore, and he became successful enough to eventually buy the fur company where he started his career.

Ceran St. Vrain, on the other hand, came from a wealthy French family. His grandfather was a member of the king's council, and his uncle was the Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana while it was under French rule. After the French revolution in 1789, the St. Vrain family left France and moved to St. Louis, where Ceran's father, Jacques, lost his money in some bad real estate deals. He got a job running a brewery, but tragedy struck when he was killed in a fire at the brewery. His mother was then left alone to raise her ten children, but she did receive help from Ceran's uncle.

As a teenager, Ceran worked for Bernard Pratte and Company, which was involved with the fur trade, and by 1825, he was on his first trading venture to the west. As years passed, Ceran's gracious and polished air earned him respect in Santa Fe as well as in St. Louis. He became a naturalized Mexican citizen, and learned to speak Spanish quite elegantly. He joined forces with the Bent brothers and did very well in the trade business.

By the late 1830's it was obvious to the mountain men that their days making a living at trapping were coming to an end. The Fur Trade boom had come and gone very quickly, too quickly for some. After only twenty years of active trapping, there were very few beaver left in the mountains, and the call for their fur had almost completely died since the silk top hat

became popular. The trappers' way of life came to an end and many men had to look for new kinds of work.

There were about 600 mountain men in all in the Rocky Mountains between 1825 and 1840. Of these, we know the details of about 230 of them and what jobs they chose when the fur trade ended.

- 70 became farmers and ranchers.
- 24 became businessmen of some type or another.
- 24 went into careers that were tied to the government.
- 50 moved into a variety of occupations. Some were teachers, miners, carpenters, Indian agents, interpreters, surveyors, post traders and guides.
- 60 stayed in the mountains to hunt and trap for their own survival.
- Very few of the trappers returned to the East; they were too much at home in the wild open spaces of the West. Some chose to be buffalo hunters, other guided wagon trains of pioneers bound for the West Coast, while still other became scouts for the U. S. Army. The times were changing, and the mountain men had to fit in the best they could.

Procedure:

1. Have students choose one of the mountain men listed below.

Jim Bridger (1804–1881)

William Bent (1809–1869)

Jim Beckwourth (1798–1866)

Joe Meek (1810–1870)

Jim Baker (1818–1898)

Kit Carson (1809–1868)

2. Have students research the dates on which the events listed on the next page occurred.
3. Based on the information and dates the students researched have students create a timeline. Be sure to have the students make the timeline big enough to write on and long enough to include all the events. Instructor may also choose to have students draw or paste a picture of the event on the timeline. Next have the students figure the age of the mountain man of their choosing and fill it in next to the event on the time line.
4. Have the students determine how old their mountain man was when he passed away, and have that number at the top right hand side of the paper, along with his name.

Teacher reference for events:

The Civil War begins -1861

The Erie Canal is completed - 1825

Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert in England - 1840

Mark Twain is born - 1835

Bent's Old Fort is built - 1833

Beethoven dies - 1827

Gold is discovered in California -1849

Thomas Jefferson dies - 1826

Sitting Bull is born - 1831

Florence Nightingale is born - 1820

Davy Crockett is killed at the Alamo - 1836

The First baseball game is played - 1838

Gold is discovered in Colorado - 1859

Colorado becomes a state - 1876

The War of 1812 is fought - 1812–1815

John Quincy Adams becomes President of the United States - 1824

P.T. Barnum, of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, starts his career as a showman - 1835

The first bicycle is built - 1818

The Cherokee are marched from Georgia to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears - 1838

The first electric clock is built and patented - 1840

Lewis and Clark return from their exploration of the west – 1806

Name: _____

Date: _____

During My Life

Instructions: Look up the year in which these events occurred and write it down next to the event. They do not go in order of when they happened, that is for you to figure out! Next, you will figure out the age of your Mountain Man when the event happened.

The Civil War begins. _____ Age: _____

The Erie Canal is completed. _____ Age: _____

Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert in England. _____ Age: _____

Mark Twain is born. _____ Age: _____

Bent's Old Fort is built. _____ Age: _____

Beethoven dies. _____ Age: _____

Gold is discovered in California. _____ Age: _____

Thomas Jefferson dies. _____ Age: _____

Sitting Bull is born. _____ Age: _____

Florence Nightingale is born. _____ Age: _____

Davy Crockett is killed at the Alamo. _____ Age: _____

The First baseball game is played. _____ Age: _____

Gold is discovered in Colorado. _____ Age: _____

Colorado becomes a state. _____ Age: _____

The War of 1812 is fought. _____ Age: _____

John Quincy Adams becomes President of the United States. _____ Age: _____

P.T. Barnum, of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, starts his career as a showman. _____

Age: _____

The first bicycle is built. _____ Age: _____

The Cherokee are marched from Georgia to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears. _____

Age: _____

The first electric clock is built and patented. _____ Age: _____

Lewis and Clark return from their exploration of the west. _____ Age: _____

Amazing Animals

Standards: Economics: 1.2; 3.1
Geography: 3.1; 3.2; 6.1
History: 2.1; 4.2; 4.3
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5
Science: 3; 5

Materials: Internet or library access
Poster boards or butcher paper
Glue, markers/crayons/colored pencils

Objective: For students to understand the characteristics of some animal species native to Colorado and how those species interact with their environment.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

“We were now, day after day, passing through countless herds of buffalo. I could scarcely form an estimate of the numbers within the range of sight at the same instant, but some idea may be formed of them by mentioning that, one day, passing along a ridge of upland prairie at least thirty miles in length, and from which a view extended about eight miles on each side of a slightly rolling plain, not a patch of grass ten yards square could be seen, so dense was the living mass that covered the country in every direction.” —George Frederick Ruxton, 1847

By the time the first trappers set out for the Rocky Mountains, nearly all of the buffalo east of the Mississippi had disappeared. But perhaps 60 million North American bison, as they are properly called, still roamed the western plains and river bottoms in 1800—so many that Captain William Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame) reported being delayed for several hours as a herd crossed the Yellowstone River in front of his exploring party.

The American buffalo has been described as “the most important animal on the western plains and prairies.” Buffalo were the backbone of the Plains Indian economy and social life. Indians ate buffalo meat, fashioned tools and weapons out of buffalo bones, and made blankets, clothing, boats, and homes out of buffalo hides. Trappers, who copied the Indians in clothing, living accommodations, and social life, also embraced the buffalo as an essential source of food, clothing, and shelter.

As time went on, European American demand for buffalo parts became an important economy in itself. Eastern demand for buffalo meat and thick winter robes—popular as floor coverings, blankets, wraps, and coats—gave trappers and Plains Indians alike an alternative income when demand for beavers declined. Buffalo tongues became a popular delicacy in fancy eastern restaurants too. American Indians and trappers took advantage of this fad, often killing bison for their tongues alone, especially in the summertime when robes were not worth harvesting. This wasteful practice did not escape the notice of western artist George Catlin, who reported a case in which some Indians traded 1,400 tongues for a few gallons of whisky.

The increased demand for buffalo parts led to a gradual shift from beaver pelt to buffalo fur production. In 1830, hunters killed about 27,000 buffalo each year; ten years later that number went up to 90,000. By 1835, traders shipped more buffalo robes than beaver pelts to St. Louis every year. Traders bought robes from Indian suppliers for about twenty-five cents’ worth of trade goods, and then sold them for five to six dollars apiece back east.

The extermination of the buffalo accelerated after 1870, when tanners discovered that buffalo hides made fine leather regardless of the season. The extension of western railroads also contributed to the buffalos' demise. Viewing the vast herds as an impediment to train travel, some railroad companies encouraged passengers to shoot at the animals from trains. Commercial hunters made quick work of the remaining buffalo. Hunters in 1872 slaughtered more than 500,000 on the Southern Plains. The great southern herd was virtually wiped out by 1880.

By 1884, only a single group of wild buffalo remained in the United States, in Yellowstone National Park, and fewer than 300 remained in the United States and Canada by the beginning of the twentieth century. Due in part to the efforts of cattle ranchers, no friends of bison in earlier times, buffalo began making a comeback. Congress passed the first law to protect buffalo in 1894. In 1913, the U.S. Department of the Treasury coined the popular buffalo head nickel—giving bison a place alongside the bald eagle and the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of America. Thanks in part to these efforts, more than 350,000 bison survive today. About 200,000 live in protected herds managed by the federal or state governments or Indian tribes. The rest live on commercial ranches that raise the animals for food.

Procedure:

1. Have each student chose one of the animals listed below. Each student should choose a different one; there should not be any repeats. If the instructor would like he or she may cut out the names of the animals and have the students draw a name of an animal out of the hat. There are 30 animals listed. If more are needed please visit <http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/Profiles/> to find additional animals.

Mammals

Bighorn Sheep
Bison
Black Bear
Elk
Grizzly Bear
Kit Fox
Lynx
Moose
Mountain Goat
Mountain Lion
Prairie Dog
Pronghorn
Raccoon
River Otter
White Tail Deer

Birds

Bald Eagle
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Canada Goose
Dusky Grouse
Golden Eagle
Great Horned Owl
Peregrine Falcon
Sandhill Crane
Whooping Crane

Fish & Reptiles

Arkansas Darter
Greenback Cutthroat Trout
Razorback Sucker
Boreal Toad
Painted Turtle

2. Next each student will research their chosen animal. They will need to find out the following questions about it:
 - Does the animal live alone? In small groups or large herds?
 - What does it eat?
 - How long do the young stay with their mothers before going out on their own?

- What part of Colorado (or the country) do they live in? Create a map showing their territory.
 - How long do they normally live?
 - Do the male and females look different? In what way?
 - Would a mountain man have encountered their animal very often?
 - Would it have been worth while for the mountain man to trap this species?
 - Are they an endangered or threatened species?
3. Have the students create a poster of their own design with the information they have researched. They must include all of the questions on their poster.
 4. Once the posters are done have the students give a short presentation on their animal.

That's the Best Invention Since Sliced Bread!

Standards: Economics: 1.2
History: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.3; 4.1; 4.2
Reading & Writing: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5

Materials: Internet or library access
24 strips of 8 ½" x 11" paper cut in half length wise
chalk/white board markers or a long length of butcher paper
markers/crayons/colored pencils

Objective: Students will understand how technology developed over time and how it affected the community.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

The first American trappers actually started working in the northeast part of the country over 200 years before the Rocky Mountain fur trade began! By 1600, the French were swapping small trinkets to the Indians in Canada for beaver, otter, mink, and fox furs. The British soon followed, trading for furs along the St. Lawrence River.

As the number of people in America grew, the further west it spread, and it was almost always the trappers who dared lead the way. Fur traders were busy around the Great Lakes before they moved on to the Mississippi Basin area. By 1800, the trappers had traveled as far west as the Missouri River, and the Rocky Mountain fur trade was just around the corner. Many trappers at this time were excited about Lewis and Clark's description of the west, and they were eager to set their traps in this new land. While the Fur Traders were the trailblazers into the frontier, it was their countrymen who led the way in technology and inventions.

Procedure:

1. Have students (in groups or individually) look up who invented each of the items below. You may want to assign an invention to a student or a group of inventions to a small group of students.

typewriter -1874	photograph – 1839
straight pin – 1824	phosphorous match - 1836
stage coach – 1835	electric light bulb - 1879
Levi pants/jeans – 1850	safety pin - 1849
lawnmower – 1849	telegraph - 1844
machine gun – 1861	harmonica - 1827
bicycle – 1818	upright piano - 1800
postage stamps with glue	baby carriage - 1848
on the back – 1847	chewing gum – 1867
washing machine – 1848	cash register – 1879
phonograph – 1877	zipper – 1841
bathtub (in the U.S.) – 1842	sewing machine – 1846
revolver – 1835	

2. After they have done the research, give the students thin strips of paper. Have them write what the invention is, the year it was invented, who invented it, and what it replaced in the past or what replaced it in the future. For example: the typewriter replaced writing documents by hand and was later replaced by the computer.
 - a. If there is room and time students may decorate the strip of paper.
3. On a chalk or white board or on a long role of butcher paper draw a line for a time line it will begin at 1800 and go until 1900. Make sure you write both end dates on the timeline and for reference for the students in the middle of the timeline mark 1850.
4. Now call on students one at a time and have them attach their invention to the appropriate place on the timeline using tape.
 - a. Move the inventions as necessary to fit them all on the timeline in the right spot.
5. Next highlight the time frame for fur trade (1820-1840).
6. Have students imagine they are a mountain man, ask them to pick one item that was invented after the fur trade (1840). Have them write a short story as to how the mountain man's life would have improved if had been invented during his time.
7. Follow up by having the students read their stories aloud to the class or to a partner.

The Price Is Right!

Standards: Economics: 1.2; 3.1; 3.2
History: 4.1; 4.2; 4.3
Mathematics: 1, 3, 6
Reading & Writing: 1; 4

Materials: Scratch paper, pencils, timer

Objectives: Students will understand the exchange of goods between trappers and traders by solving mathematical problems.

Information relevant to the Fur Trade:

When a trapper got ready to head up to the mountains for another season of work, he wanted to make sure that he had all the supplies he would need for the year before setting out. He was most likely to buy his supplies from a trading fort or from petty traders he might run into. The following is a list of all the items he would need:

- 2–3 horses or mules - one to saddle, the others to carry equipment and pelts
- 6 traps - carried in a leather bag called a “trap-sack”
- 1 rifle and enough ammunition to last two years
- A hatchet - to carry on the pommel of your saddle
- A saddle, bridle, and several apishamores - square pieces of buffalo robes to use as saddle blankets
- A whetstone in a sheath of buffalo hide
- pistols
- bullet pouch to carry steel balls, flint and steel, and other odds and ends
- powder horn - usually made from buffalo horns, which are short and black
- bullet mold awl - a tool to punch holes in leather so that it could be sewn together
- 1-2 pounds of tobacco in a pouch
- Possibles bag - a deerskin bag containing:
 - cured deerskin - for making moccasins, etc.
 - clay pipe in a pipe holder
 - small wooden box containing castoreum, or beaver scent
 - trade items and trinkets - to trade with Indians
- Buffalo robe - to use as a blanket
- Buffalo (bison) robe - to use as a blanket
- Kettles - for cooking

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into two equal teams. Give each team (or each student) a copy of “Rendezvous Price! 1825”.
2. Read the problems to them orally one at a time. Allow them 3 to 5 minutes to work. The first team/student to solve the problem correctly wins a point for their team.
3. Once all of the questions have been answered give the team with the most points a reward of your choice.

Questions:

In 1825, a beaver pelt was worth different amounts if you were a free trapper or you had a contract with a company. How much would you receive for each pelt if you were a free trapper? **Answer:** \$5.00 per pound.

How much if you had a contract with Ashley? **Answer:** \$2.00 per pound

You are a trapper. To join Ashley's company you would need your own set of traps. A set has six traps, how much will that cost? **Answer:** \$54.00

How much will a set of six traps weigh? **Answer:** 36 pounds

If you had an Ashley contract how many beaver pelts would it take to buy the following: 5 lbs. of coffee, 5 lbs. of sugar, and 5 lbs. of flour? **Answer:** 10 pelts

How much would 10 3-point North-West blankets cost? **Answer:** \$90.00

As a free trader the cost of 1 Hawken rifle, 5 lbs. of lead, and 8 lbs. of gunpowder is?
Answer: \$45.00

How much would 1 awl, 2 lbs. of salt, ½ lb. of pepper, 1 pair of scissors, and 1 dozen fishhooks cost? **Answer:** \$11.00

A beaver weighs about 37 pounds. If you caught 8 beaver in one day and carried them back to camp, how much weight did you carry? **Answer:** 296 pounds

If you were a free trapper and had trapped 250 beaver in 1825, how much money would you have made at the rendezvous? **Answer:** \$2,500.00

You are a trader. American Indians will trade pelts for cloth, dye, and beads. For you to start your business you need 15 yards of blue cloth, 20 yards of scarlet cloth, 20 pieces of vermillion, and 10 pounds of beads. How much will this cost? **Answer:** \$365.00

Ashley could sell pelts in St. Louis for \$10.00 each. What is his profit if a contract trapper sold him 150 pelts? **Answer:** \$1,200.00

You are at the headwaters of the Missouri River in Montana and you want to get to Ft. Defiance in South Dakota. Ft. Defiance is half-way to St. Louis, how many miles downstream would you have to travel to get there? **Answer:** 1,475 miles

Rendezvous Prices! 1825		
2,950 miles from st. Louis to the headwaters of the Missouri River in Montana		
<i>Beaver Pelts Weigh 2 Pounds (LBS) each</i>		

Pepper \$6.00/LB	Scarlet Cloth \$6.00/yd	Beaver Pelts Free trappers \$5.00/Lb Ashley contract \$2.00/LB
Sugar \$1.50/LB	Blue Cloth \$5.00/yd	Traps \$9.00 each Weight - 6 lbs
Tobacco \$3.00/LB	Flannel Cloth \$1.50/YD	Hawken Rifle \$24.00
Coffee \$1.50/LB	Buttons \$1.50/Dozen	Gun powder \$2.00 /lb

Salt \$1.25/LB	Ribbons \$.75/YD	Lead \$1.00/LB
Flour \$1.00/LB	Beads \$5.00/lb	Flints \$1.00/Dozen
Rum \$13.50/gallon	Best Quality 3-point North west blanket \$9.00 each	Fish hooks \$1.50/Dozen
Vermillion \$6.00/each	Scissors \$2.00 each	Awl \$2.00 each
Moccasins \$.50/pair	Knife \$2.50 each	Spurs \$2.00/Pair

“See You At the Rendezvous!”

**Board game Instructions
And Extra Game Supplies**

Instructions for the board game “See You at the Rendezvous!”

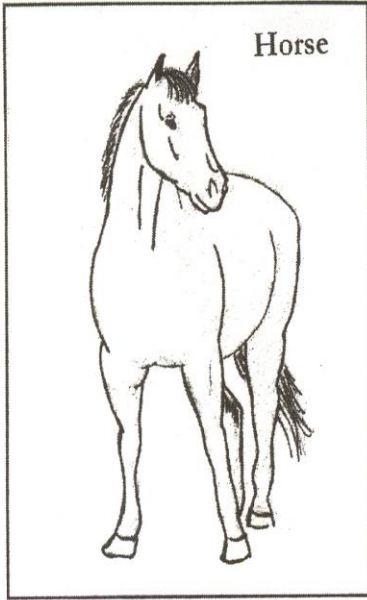
In this game, two to five players are mountain men. They start out the game at a fort before the trapping season. They are each equipped with the same supplies and will face certain hazards and strokes of good luck throughout their journeys. The object is to collect as many beaver pelts as they can before they arrive at the rendezvous, but there is also a bonus for getting there first. Each trapper bets that he can get to the rendezvous before the others, and all agree to pay three of their own beaver pelts to the first one there. In addition, players may cash in the supplies they still have at the end of the game for their equivalent in pelts (see the exchange rate below) from the common pile. The player with the most pelts at the end is the winner!

Rules

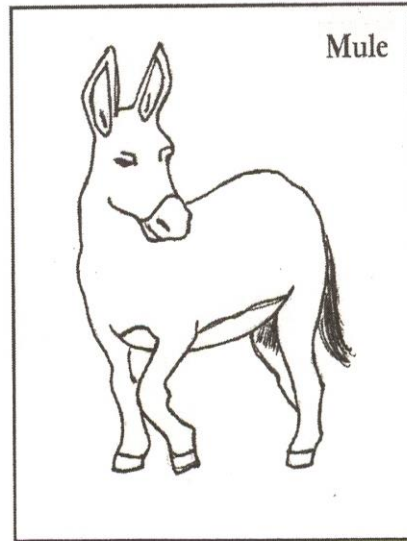
1. Each player begins the game with one of each of the following supplies: horse, mule, gun, trap, tomahawk, blanket, knife, skillet, flint and steel, powder horn
2. The die is rolled by the players, and the person with the highest number goes first.
3. Whenever a player gains or loses supplies or beaver pelts, he must either take them from or return them to a common pile.
4. At any time before they reach the sun on #37, players must choose to return to the fort to replace any of the supplies they may have lost up to that point. A return to the fort counts as one turn, and players who return to the fort must start the game over from there.
5. To enter the rendezvous at the end of the game, the player’s marker must land there by an exact roll of the die.
6. The player who reaches the rendezvous first is given three beaver pelts by each of the players as they arrive.
7. To get more beaver pelts when they reach the rendezvous, players may exchange their remaining supplies for their worth in pelts as follows:

horse = 6 pelts	blanket = 2 pelts
mule = 5 pelts	trap = 1 pelt
gun = 5 pelts	tomahawk = 1 pelt
powder horn = 2 pelts	knife = 1 pelt
skillet = 2 pelts	flint and steel = 1 pelt

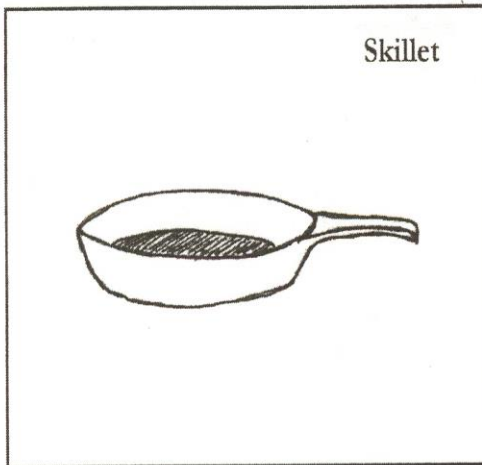
8. The winner is the player who counts the most pelts once everyone has arrived at the rendezvous.



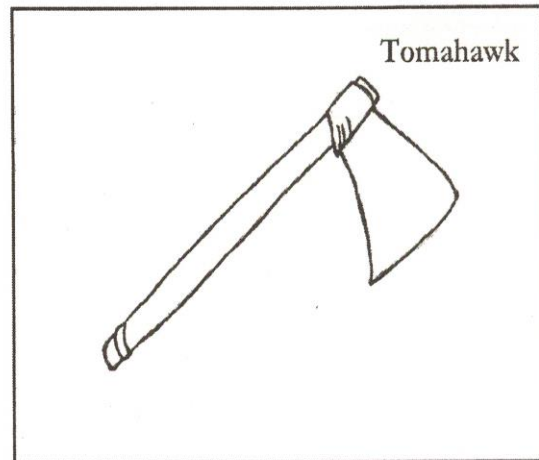
Horse



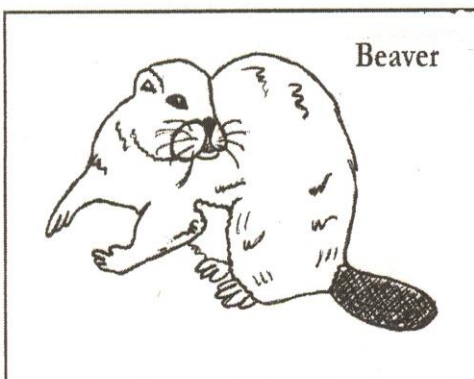
Mule



Skillet

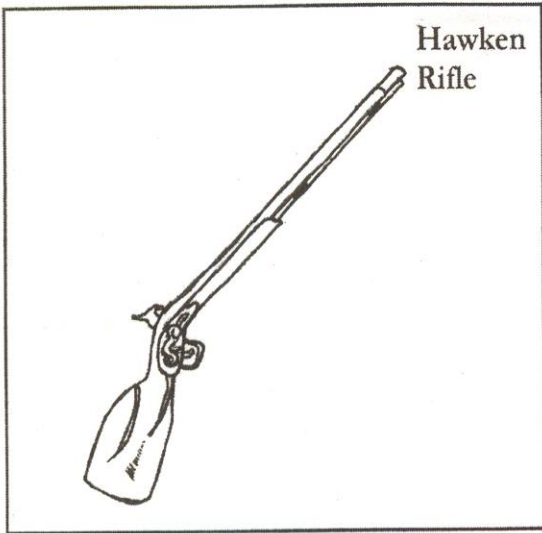


Tomahawk

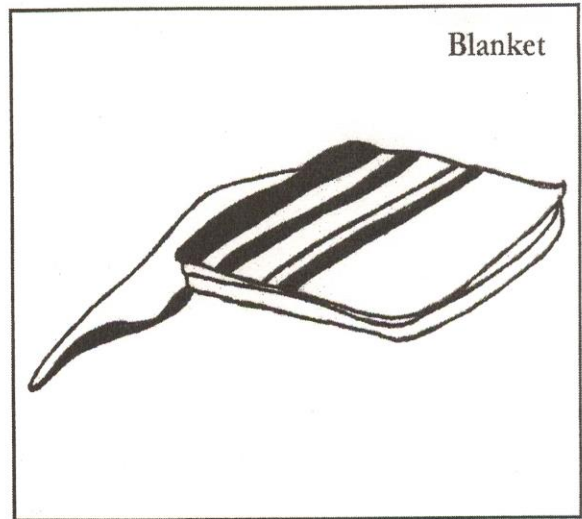


Beaver

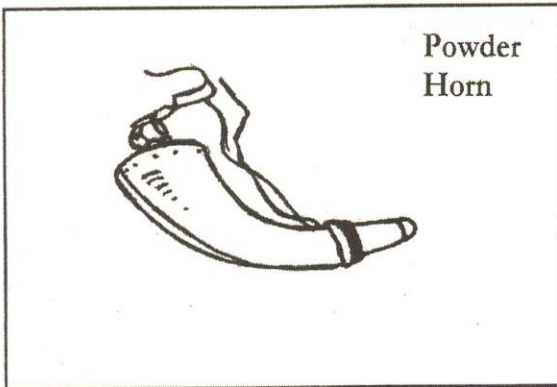
Game Supplies



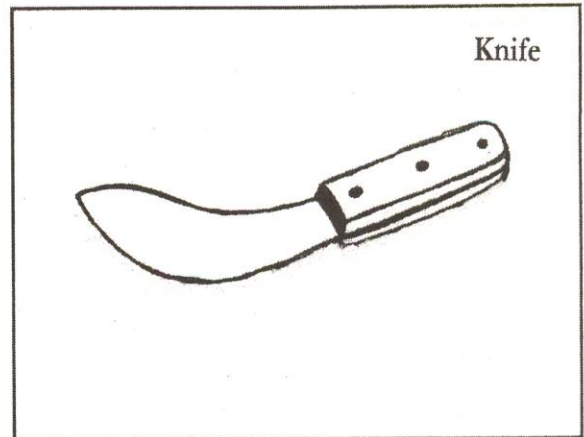
Hawken
Rifle



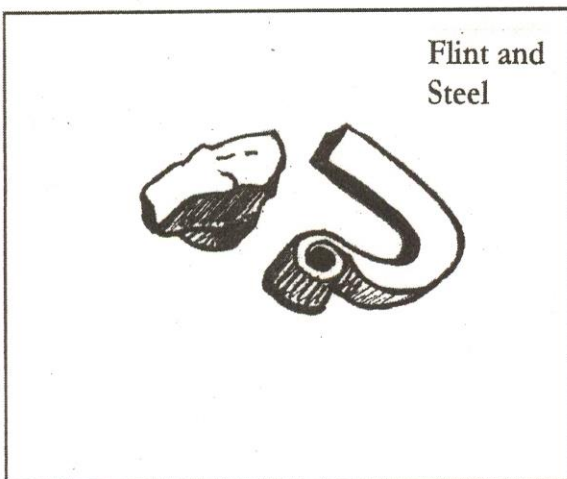
Blanket



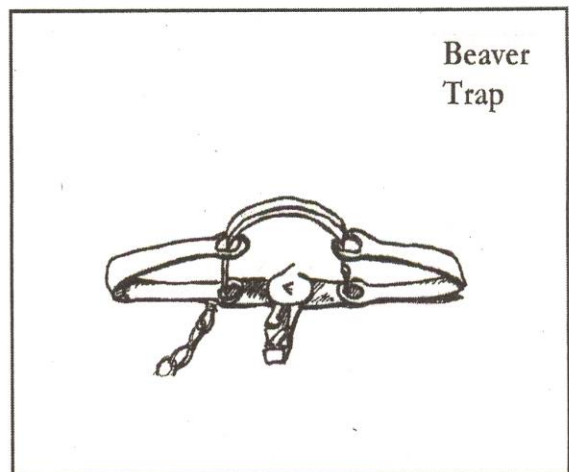
Powder
Horn



Knife



Flint and
Steel



Beaver
Trap

Stories and Music

Information on the Stories and Music

Side I – Mountain Man tall-tales. Storyteller: Lawrence B. Helberg

Side II – U.S. Period Music, Circa 1830-60. Performed by David A. Brose, Ken Smelser, Tom Hayden, and Alan Miller

The music you will hear on this CD is characteristic of the popular styles heard in parlors, at casual social gatherings, and at informal public performances between 1830 and 1860. This was “popular” music of its day, but it entered folk tradition quickly, and is now considered folk music. As is the cases of most folk music, no single composer can be identified for most of these songs. The instrumental melodies and sung ballads have most often been reworked and slightly altered by hundreds of people who learned them in informal situations and passed them on orally.

By about 1800, the piano was a popular parlor instrument. People moving West often brought this important piece of family property with them, as ownership of a piano indicated “refinement” and education in a family. Pianos were, of course, also heard in public places such as taverns. In folk tradition, the piano was used for the accompaniment of dances, accompaniment of the voice, and in small ensembles.

The first five selections heard on this tape feature the piano performed in a style which would have been heard in taverns, in private homes, and at informal gatherings, as opposed to the style of performance that represented European formal art music, played in grand performance halls of the 19th century.

The other musical selections on this tape include the use of banjo, fiddle, guitar, harmonica, and mandolin. The banjo was originally an African-American instrument brought to America by slaves during the 17th and 18th centuries. This instrument entered popular use in Anglo-American tradition as the result of minstrel shows, medicine shows, and from interplay between African and Anglo-Americans. By the mid-19th century, the banjo was firmly rooted in American folk music tradition.

The fiddle was used by both African and Anglo-Americans, and was often used to accompany dances in the 18th and 19th centuries. It wasn’t until the mid-19th century that the mandolin and guitar reached popularity in the urban centers of America. Shortly afterwards, they reached the rural areas of the southern and Midwestern United States.

Great care was taken in the performance of the music heard on this tape to recreate the style that would have been common during the early-to-mid 19th century. We feel that both the musical selections and their performances are as close as possible to the music of the time, as passed on by informally trained musicians. As of today, all of these musical selections have become folk songs and folk music in the American West.

1. **“Flop Eared Mule”** – David A. Brose, piano.
This song was composed and passed on orally through the Appalachian Mountains in the early-to-mid 19th century. The tune is still performed today throughout the United States by fiddlers and banjoists. Volga German people of northeastern Colorado also perform this song under the title, “Sugar Valley Polka.” This version is played in the Ragtime style that was just beginning to feel its “roots” in the mid-19th century in dance and musical styles known as cake walks and two-steps.
2. **“Richmond”** – David A. Brose, piano.
As one might guess, this song was first written to honor the bustling southern urban center of Richmond, Virginia, in the early 1800s. This song was popular as a dance tune in St. Louis from the beginning to the middle of the century. Like “Flop Eared Mule,” this song is played in the Ragtime style.
3. **“Lighthouse Harry”** – David A. Brose, piano.
This melody was written to honor “Lighthouse” Harry Lee, a Revolutionary War hero, who was a relative of Robert E. Lee, General of the Confederate forces during the Civil War. This song is yet another splendid example of the parlor piano music popular in St. Louis between the years 1800 and 1850.
4. **“Rose Waltz”** – David A. Brose, piano, and Ken Smelser, fiddle.
The “Rose Waltz” is performed here as a piano/violin duet. The violin was a popular instrument at dances during the 19th century. Often, “country” violinists were known as “fiddlers,” and many traditional folk dance melodies have come to be known as “fiddle tunes.” The “Rose Waltz” is still popular throughout the United States at country dances.
5. **“50 Years Ago Waltz”** – David A. Brose, piano, and Ken Smelser, fiddle.
Like the “Rose Waltz,” this wonderful melody illustrates the musical interplay between the fiddler and the pianist in the style of mid-19th century parlor music. This melody can still be heard today as a showpiece at fiddle contests throughout the United States.
6. **“Shenandoah”** – David A. Brose, piano.
During the early settlement of the American West, “Shenandoah” was an extremely popular song. Its haunting quality lends itself to performance on the banjo, an instrument that can produce sad, melancholy feelings when played slowly. This song has become associated with the earliest American pioneers that first followed paths from the midwestern United States to the California coast.
7. **“Midnight on the Water”** – David A. Brose, mandolin, and Tom Hayden, guitar.
This melody is performed here as a guitar/mandolin duo. The use of the guitar reached the rural mountains of the south somewhat later than it did the large cities, and the fiddle and banjo remained the most popular mountain instruments until the early 20th century. This song is performed as a slow waltz in 3/4 time, as compared with other fast country dance melodies which are most often written and played in 2/4 or 4/4 time.

8. **“Gal I Left Behind”** – Tom Hayden, vocals, and David A. Brose, banjo.

This ballad tells the story of a man who left his sweetheart to travel into the unsettled western United States. Also heard under the titles “Maggie Walker Blues” and “I’ve Always Been A Rambler,” this song is well-known in the Appalachian Mountains. Many early fur trappers experienced the sorrows related in this song, as they left their sweethearts to travel west, and never returned to marry.

Lyrics:

I was raised up on love and care,
Near a farm in Tennessee;
My parents raised me tenderly,
They had no child but me.
My mind been set on ramblin’,
With them I wouldn’t agree;
So I left my aged parents,
With them no more to see.
There was a wealthy gentleman,
Lived on a farm nearby;
He had a beautiful daughter,
On her I cast my eye;
She was so tall and slender,
So pretty an’ so fair;
There never was another,
To her I could compare.

I started out in this wide world,
Strange places for to see;
When I met Miss Maggie Walker
An’ she fell in love with me;
Her pockets all lined with greenbacks,
And on the Book I swore;
That she’d be mine and only mine
If I would roam no more.

I asked her if it mattered,
If I crossed o’er the plains;
She said it makes no difference
If you never return again;
I knew by how she said it
That she’d never change her mind,
So we shook hands and parted,
An’ I left my gal behind.

I started out to leavin’,
To the salt flats I was bound;
When I reached the salt flats
Well I viewed the city all around.
Well the work and the money was plentiful,
And the girls were kind to me,

But the only object to my mind
Was the girl in Tennessee.

I started out one mornin',
Down on the Market Square;
Well, the mail train was arrivin'
And I met the carrier there.
He handed me a letter,
So's that I could understand,
That the gal I'd left behind me
Had married another man.

I turned my "Hoss" all around and around
Not knowing what to do;
I handed back the letter,
Although I'd read it through;
I turned all around and I backed up
And the company I'd resign.
Now I go all around from town to town
For the girl I left behind.

9. **"Santa Fe Trail"** – By James Grafton Rogers. Tom Hayden, vocals, and David A. Brose, mandolin.

This ballad was written by Colorado poet, James Grafton Rogers. Before the coming of the railroad, the Santa Fe Trail was used as a trade route, and was important in bringing materials to the early pioneers. Goods made by Native Americans and the Spanish were also sent from the American Southwest to points north and east via the Santa Fe Trail.

Lyrics:

Say, Pard', have you sighted a scooner,
Long side of that Santa Fe trail;
Well they made it here Monday or sooner,
With a water key tied on their tail.
There was Ma and Pa in the mule seat,
Yes, an' somewhere along the way,
A little tow-headed gal on a Pinto,
Just a jinglin' for old Santa Fe.
Oh-oh-oh-oh
Just a jinglin' for old Santa Fe.

Well, I saw her ride down the arroyo
Way back in the Arkansas sand;
With a smile like an acre of sunflowers
And a little brown quirt in her hand.
She straddled her pony so airy
And rode like she carried the mail.
Well her eyes they set fire to the prairie,

Way out on the Santa Fe Trail.
Oh-oh-oh-oh
Just a jinglin' for old Santa Fe.

10. **"Shenandoah"** – David A. Brose, harmonica, and Alan Miller, fiddle.

"Shenandoah" is played for a second time as a guitar/harmonica duet. The harmonica was a popular folk instrument beginning in the mid-19th century, because it was small and easy to carry in a pocket, easy to master, and very inexpensive.

11. **"At a Georgia Camptown Meeting"** – David A. Brose, guitar, and Alan Miller, fiddle.

This song was written during the mid-19th century, when religious camp meetings became popular in the southern and mid-western United States. Camp meetings were held in tents, usually at the edge of a town or city, and included preaching of Christian gospel and the singing of hymns and psalms.

12. **"Midnight on the Water"** – David A. Brose, guitar, and Alan Miller, fiddle.

As compared with the earlier mandolin/guitar version of this melody, this tune is rendered here as a fiddle/guitar duet.

13. **"Sugar in the Gourd"** – David A. Brose, banjo, and Alan Miller, fiddle.

"Sugar in the Gourd" is a traditional American fiddle tune. It is the type of tune used to accompany square dances, and is here performed as a banjo/fiddle duet in the style of late 19th century square dances.

Native American music is also included on this audio tape. The following songs are performed by members of various plains tribes.

14. Snake Dance – Flathead tribe

15. Pow Wow Dance – Canadian Plains tribes

16. Dog Dance – Plains tribes

17. War Dance – Ponca tribe

18. Charging the Feather Song – Lakota tribe

19. Grass Charging/Flattening Song – Lakota tribe

Colorado Experience: Bent's Fort

Video Vocabulary

And

Discussion Questions

<http://www.rmpbs.org/coloradoexperience/places/bents-fort/>

Video

“Colorado Experience: Bent’s Fort”

Vocabulary

Barter – When people trade for the things they need rather than using money.

Goods and Services – Things that can be bought or traded. Goods are physical things. Services are things that can be done for someone.

Industry – A type of business that makes something or offers a service.

Adobe Brick - Building brick made out of sun dried earth and straw.

Pelt –The hide or skin of an animal.

Manufactured Goods -Goods made by machinery especially on a large scale.

Blacksmith- Person that makes and repairs things made of metal.

Westward Expansion – Gaining of territories by the United States across the whole area of the North American continent from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west.

Cholera- Stomach disease spread by use of infected water holes

Rendezvous – A gathering that takes place at a fixed place and time.

Discussion Questions

1. What business brought the Bent brothers to Colorado?
2. Where did the Santa Fe Trail start? Where did it end?
3. What are some items traded at the Fort? Where did they come from?
4. Which cultural group brought buffalo hides to Bent's Fort to trade?
5. Who did William Bent marry? Why was his marriage important to the success of the Fort?
6. Which group brought the beaver pelts?
7. Who were some of the famous Coloradoans that visited the Fort?
8. Where did Charles Bent set up his part of the trading operation and what did they bring to trade?
9. Why did trade end at Bent's Fort? What are some theories about what happened to the Fort after Bent and his family left?

Online Exhibit and Digital Badge

For more information, explore Bent's Fort

Digital Badge:

International Trade during the Fur Trade Era

[http://exhibits.historycolorado.org/bentsfort/bents_home.h
tml](http://exhibits.historycolorado.org/bentsfort/bents_home.html)

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