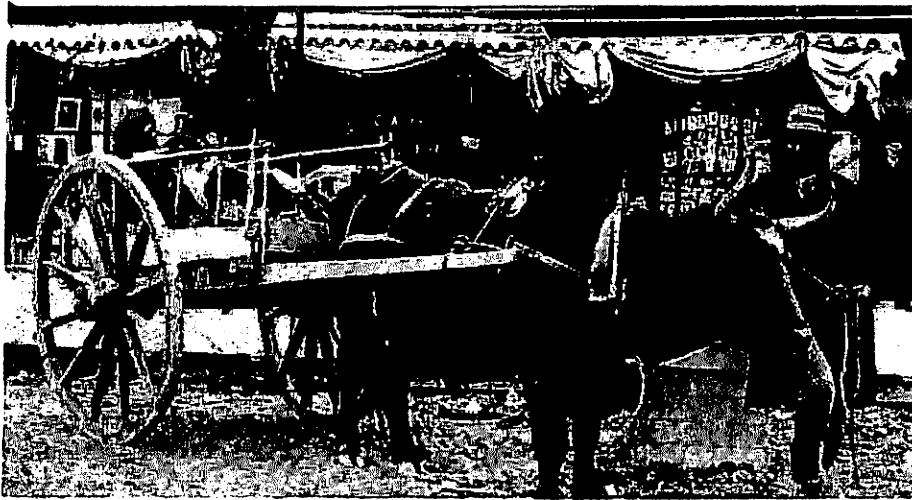


Animation Artifacts Booklet

The Forks National Historic Site of Canada



**By Alan Bouchard
Summer 2002
Revised 2003**



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Pemmican (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: Laura Buchan (Made fall/winter 1995)

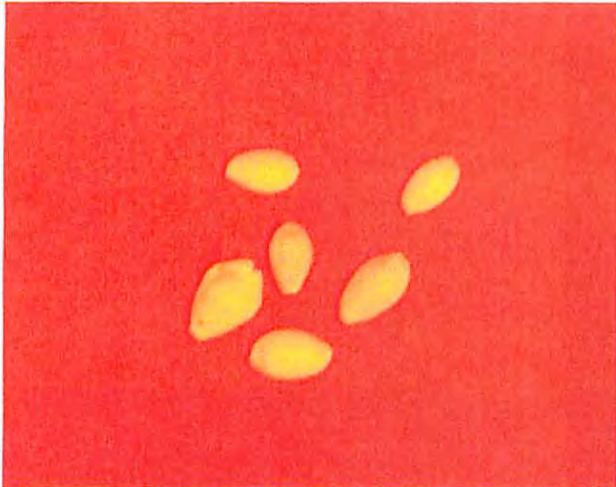
MATERIAL: Dried bison meat, bison fat, and sometimes dried berries

COMMENTS:

- "Pimikan" – comes from the Cree word meaning "manufactured grease"
- An important food source used throughout the fur trade by voyageurs and traders working for the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.
- Métis were primary producers and traders of pemmican
- Lightweight, nutritious and nonperishable making it ideal for taking on long journeys or for keeping over the winter as an emergency food source.
- Voyageurs who would travel up to 16 - 18 hours per day could subsist on small amounts of pemmican but they would make bannock or eat fresh or dried fish to provide variety in their diet.
- Slices of Pemmican could be eaten straight from the bag or made into a stew
- Pemmican can last for years if stored properly, in a skin bag, greased along the seams to eliminate moisture from getting in.

Preparation:

1. Cut meat into thin strips and dry on a rack in the sun or over a fire
2. Spread dried meat on a hide and pound with stone mallets until it becomes a powder
3. Put powdered meat into a rawhide container
4. Add melted fat and mix
5. Add dried berries such as saskatoons or chokecherries for flavor and vitamins to produce a higher grade of pemmican



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Cowry Shells

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact. Before 1730 AD

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Shell

COMMENTS:

- Aboriginal groups in The Forks area traded with adjacent tribes who in turn traded with other tribes for food and natural products originating as far south as the Gulf of Mexico and as far west as the Pacific Ocean.
- Shells like these may have been used for clothing decoration or for making jewelry
- Cowry Shells are the outer covering of a salt water organism



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Bison bone fragments

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact until bison died out

SOURCE: Delta marsh research station on the beach drift line

MATERIAL: Petrified bison bone fragments

COMMENTS:

- Animal bones were fashioned into weapons and tools by Aboriginal peoples
- Ribs were used for hide scraping tools or stone knife handles, smaller bones were made into awls and other hide working tools
- Large animal bones were smashed and cooked in clay pots to remove the fat which was then used in making pemmican



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Pottery Shards (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: Made by interpreters

MATERIAL: Clay

COMMENTS:

- Aboriginal groups used pottery vessels for storing, transporting, and cooking food
- Making pottery from local clays required a great amount of skill and knowledge. Clay had to be dug out of the ground, mixed with a tempering material to prevent cracking during firing, shaped and fired. The pottery found at The Forks was shaped inside woven bags or net molds which left their impressions on the exterior of the pots.
- Archaeologists use different styles of pottery to identify different cultures. The styles are often named for the area where the style is first discovered
- Pottery styles found at The Forks include: Winnipeg River, Blackduck, Plains Woodland, Sandy Lake, Red River, Bird Lake, Duck Bay, Rainy River, Oneota
- Food residue found on pottery shards can be analyzed to find out what prehistoric peoples were cooking and provide information on their diet



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Tin Plate (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.83.167.10, X76.251.169, X.76.251.163, and HX.83.167.1

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tin-plated steel

COMMENTS:

- Aboriginal groups obtained metal goods, such as axes, knives, awls and needles through trade with the HBC and NWC
- Worn out or broken metal articles were often recycled; tinkling cones were made from old copper pots, rifle barrels were made into hide scrapers and so on
- Light weight and strong



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Passport/Paper Holder (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.3185 (two)

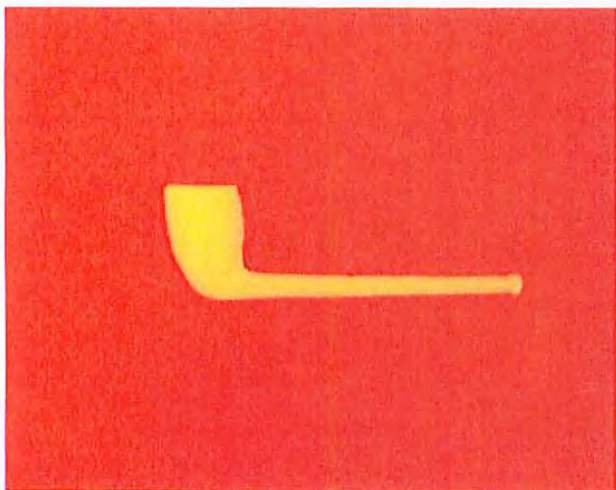
TIME PERIOD: Immigration (1870 +)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Canvas, paper

COMMENTS:

- Used to hold a ticket, passport, immigration papers, etc...
- Provided by the steamship company that immigrants contracted with to cross the ocean
- The papers inside the folder are in four different Eastern European languages: – Polish, Hungarian, Croatian, Czech.
- The Red Star Line was a company name owned by the International Navigation Company, which was founded in Philadelphia in 1871. A Belgian subsidiary was formed in Antwerp in 1872. By 1902 the Red Star Line was owned by J. Pierpont Morgan, who also controlled the White Star Line, which is famous for building/owning the Titanic. In 1906 the Red Star Line offered weekly sailings from Europe to North America. The company operated until 1934.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Clay Pipe (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.276, HX.R.273, (three broken)

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Pipe Clay

COMMENTS:

- English Style clay pipe, a popular trade item (HBC)
- These pipes were very fragile but they were excellent for smoking because of their shape. The long tunnel from which the smoke is drawn and the large bulb where the tobacco is stored allow for optimum smoking enjoyment
- During canoe trips a voyageur's period of work was punctuated by regular rests for smoking, and the distance covered between rests came to be called a "pipe".
- By the beginning of the 20th century tobacco pipes were being replaced by cigars and cigarettes



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Dag Knife (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None (three)

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 - 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Steel

COMMENTS:

- Called a dag knife because it is a cross between a dagger (pointed tip) and a knife (sharp blade).
- Also known as a "beavertail stabber" or "Hudson's Bay Company dag"
- The dag knife came in two sizes: 18 cm (7 in.) and 23 cm (9 in.) and was fabricated out of steel.
- The dag knife is an all-purpose tool and was used as a knife, as a spear or lance point, or as a blade on a wooden war club.
- Dag knives were sold without handles, and were hafted with wood or bone handles by their owners
- Both the Hudson's Bay Company and NorthWest Company traded the dag knife with the Aboriginal peoples.
- The Hudson's Bay Company dag knife can identified by the mark - a small fox stamped on the blade.
- The knives were originally manufactured in England and imported for the fur trade, but local blacksmiths also made them.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Tin Cup (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: X.70.147.86, X.78.226.39, 8.226.28, X.70.147.139, X70.147.143, X70.147.145, X70.147.96, X.70.134.140, X70.147.117, X70.147.60 (ten)

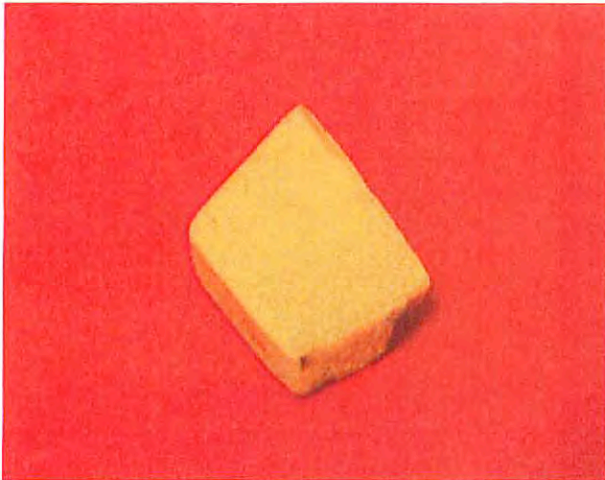
TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tin plated steel

COMMENTS:

- Light weight and strong
- Aboriginal people obtained metal goods, such as these cups, through trade with the HBC and NWC



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Soap

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Contact and on (1730)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Animal fat and lye

COMMENTS:

- Used for personal hygiene, washing clothes, and housecleaning
- Commercially made soaps such as; mottled, castile, or toilet soaps, were sold by the HBC
- Home made soap could be made from available materials (wood ash, water, lime, and animal fat) while imported soap was a luxury item for many



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Beaver felt remnant (trimmings from brim of hat)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

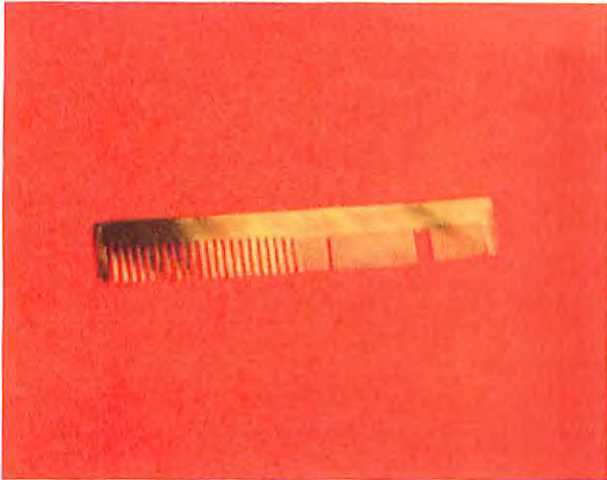
SOURCE:

John William McMicking
The Hatmaker
179 Melville Street
Dundas, ON L9H 2A9

MATERIAL: Beaver fur

COMMENTS:

- A real example of beaver felt
- Beaver fur was desirable because it made a felt that was durable, waterproof, and had a silky sheen
- The popularity of beaver hats in Europe depleted the beaver populations of European and Russia creating a market for North American beaver fur.
- The downy under fur of these animals, when chemically treated, has scaled surfaces with barb-like projections, which will lock the fibers together to make a strong felt.
- A mix of nitrate and mercury were the common chemicals used. Mercury was dangerous and was believed to cause muscles spasms to those who made and wore the hats. It also caused mental diseases, hence the term "mad as a hatter"
- Sometimes rabbit fur/hair was added as a middle layer to make the hat stronger
- The felt had to be shaped, cut, and sewn to make the hat. A complicated process that could take days in the making.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Comb (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: X.72.438.31, X.72.438.25, X.72.438.30

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Horn

COMMENTS:

- Combs were a popular trade item from very early times
- From 1689 to 1710 large annual orders for ivory combs were noted in HBC records for Fort Albany on Hudson's Bay
- The premier comb of the fur-trade was the small ivory double-edged comb, supplemented eventually by similar combs in horn or boxwood (a tree species)
- Next in popularity was the plain single-edged horn comb six inches or less in length, which was sold continuously for nearly 200 years.
- Third in popularity was the larger eight inch horn dressing comb
- Fragments of combs were excavated at The Forks



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Twist Tobacco

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tobacco

COMMENTS:

- Before the arrival of the Europeans local Aboriginal groups used a tobacco made from dried willow bark and bearberry leaves for ceremonies
- Processed leaf tobacco was a popular trade item for both the NWC and the HBC
- There were several ways that tobacco was shaped for trade. Firstly, there was the roll, which was a rope of tobacco that was arm's length long. Another form was the carrot, made of cured tobacco rolled in linen.
- Tobacco was also formed into a tear-drop shape called a twist. Twist tobacco, also known as "Spencer's twist" in London and "Northwest Twist" in Albany came in different sizes. The Hudson's Bay Company traded twists of 1 3/4 inches in diameter.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Gambling Stick (replica)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: Robert Houle. A donation to the Forks National Historic Site

MATERIAL: Metal

COMMENTS:

- This Gambling Stick is a replica in size and weight of the original gambling sticks, which were made of wood or pieces of reed. The symbol on this stick is a Bear in Water
- Popular guessing game for Aboriginal groups who frequented The Forks.
- Two teams (or two people) sat at opposite ends of an animal skin
- To play the game, sticks were placed on the animal skin rug, amongst grass, and contestant guessed which stick he would pull out of the pile next. The sticks each had different nature symbols carved into them
- Often a bet would be placed towards which stick was going to be picked from the pile
- Often people lost all of their belongings in the game. It was a very sharing community so most of the items, if not all, would be returned to the loser.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Clinker

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Railway Era

SOURCE: Found here at The Forks

MATERIAL: Coal byproduct

COMMENTS:

- A non combustible byproduct of the coal which was burned to heat the boiler which produced steam to power the engine of a steam locomotive
- The clinkers would have been shoveled out of the grate in the firebox through the fire hole



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Railway Spike

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Railway Era

SOURCE: Found here at The Forks

MATERIAL: Iron

COMMENTS:

- A large spike that holds the sections of iron rail to the wooden railway tie
- Two railway spikes are driven into the outside edge of the rail, and one spike is driven into the inside edge, to hold it in place so that the gauge (distance between the rails) doesn't change
- The railway spikes are driven into the railway ties with a large hammer by a navvy (railway labourer)



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Beads (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact, Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Glass

COMMENTS:

- Beads were made of glass in Venice, Italy and imported for the fur trade by NWC and HBC. Beads were produced in many different colours and sizes. The most popular were the small “seed” beads which were traded for hundreds of years.
- The Aboriginal people used beads to make jewellery or to ornament their clothing or personal belongings (tobacco bags, saddles, dog harness etc.)
- Before the Europeans brought glass beads to North America, shells, dyed porcupine quills and mineral pigments were used for ornamentation purposes
- Aboriginal people living on the plains generally used geometric motifs and those living in the forested areas usually produced floral patterns of beadwork



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Fire Steel (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.6637.1 (six)

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

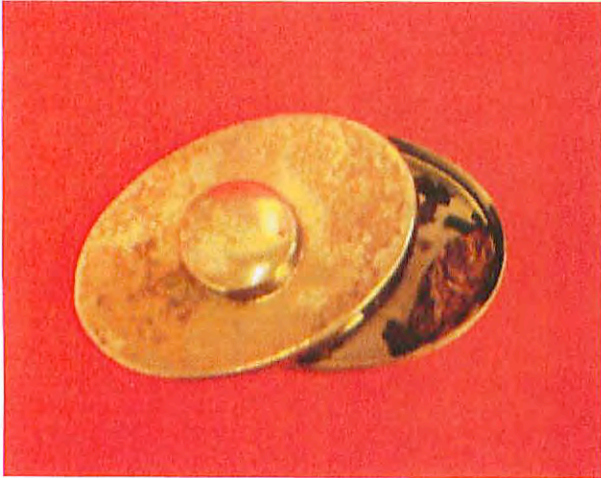
MATERIAL: Iron

COMMENTS:

- Fire steels were imported from England or made by local blacksmiths
- Fire steels were made in many different shapes, this “c” scroll shape is associated with the HBC
- Popular trade item throughout the fur trade era
- Better than matches because you wouldn’t have to worry about it getting wet and better than a magnifying glass because the sun would not always be shining when you wanted to start a fire

- **Directions for use:**

1. Take a piece of charred cloth and fray one edge. This will increase the surface area and better your chance at catching a spark
2. Hold the striker in your left hand. Use your thumb to pinch the charred cloth on top of the striker. Make sure that a sharp edge of the flint is tipped upward slightly.
3. Hold the flint in your right hand, and strike a glancing downward blow against the sharp edge of the striker. The sparks will be thrown upwards and caught by the charred cloth.
4. Once the charred cloth has caught a spark and is glowing red, place it into a couple of more pieces of charred cloth. Now blow on the glowing charred cloth until it bursts into flames



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Tobacco/Tinder tin (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 B 1850)

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tin plated metal and glass

COMMENTS:

- Tobacco tins were traded for many years, beginning in the 17th century.
- Containers like this one served two purposes. The first was to store tobacco in a strong, secure box and the second was to hold a glass lens, which could be used to start a fire.
- The burning glass is known to be more effective than a fire-steel, but was limited to only being used on sunny days.
- Personal tobacco boxes, suitable for carrying in your pocket, were made of a variety of materials



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Marbles with carrying case (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.6649.1A (14)

TIME PERIOD: Contact and Settlement

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Marbles were made out of clay.
The carrying case was made out of animal hide (bison, deer)

COMMENTS:

- Form of entertainment for Aboriginals



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Basket (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.2110, HX.R.3794

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Willow

COMMENTS:

- Traditional shape
- Different colours resulted from peeling off the bark (yellow), leaving it on (green), selecting bark from plants affected by blight (brown or red) or by soaking with dyes
- Made by weaving slender, flexible withes around a sturdy frame of split sapling
- Willow branches for basket making were collected in the early spring



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Corn Cob (modern)

ACCESSION #: None

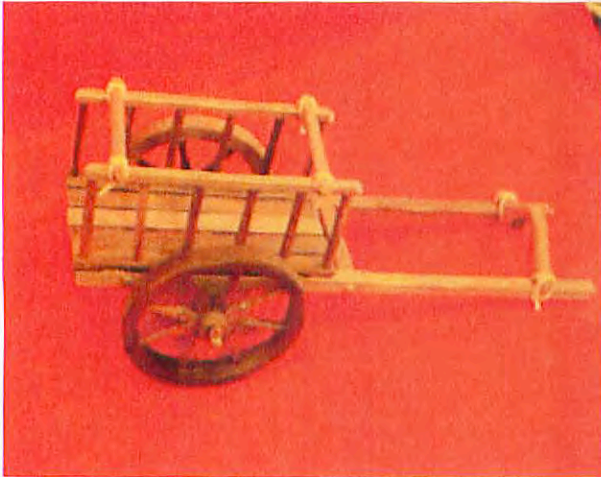
TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: Local Corn field

MATERIAL: Dried Feed Corn

COMMENTS:

- Originally corn was domesticated and grown by Aboriginal groups living in what is now the southwestern United States. The cultivation of corn spread east and north along the Mississippi River and into Manitoba along the Red River
- Aboriginal peoples planted corn in the spring, left it to grow over the summer, and returned to harvest it in the fall. The corn was dried and some was buried in storage pits dug into the ground. Archaeologists discovered pits used for storing dried corn when they excavated a village site at the rapids in the Lockport area, 30 km north of The Forks.
- Corn may have been grown near The Forks. A scapula hoe made from a bison shoulder blade, which could have been used to cultivate crops, was excavated here by Archaeologists
- Native varieties of corn were much smaller than the cobs we are familiar with today



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Red River Cart (model)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur-trade until late 1800's

SOURCE: Cliff & Joyce McGhie (Wpg: 837-2772, Gimli: 204-642-7301)

MATERIAL: Wood, rawhide

COMMENTS:

- An ox usually pulled the cart.
- Used by the Métis people and other Aboriginal groups to travel while hunting bison and for freighting for the HBC.
- The wheels could be removed and attached to the sides in order to allow for transportation across a body of water.
- If anything broke on the cart during a trip, wood was readily available for repairing a cart.
- The wheels were not lubricated because dirt, sand and mud would get caught up in the wheel. Therefore, the noise from Red River cart wheels could be heard for miles away



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Tobacco block

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tobacco, molasses, and licorice

COMMENTS:

- Tobacco was used in ceremonies and other rituals
- A popular trade item with the NWC, HBC, and other Aboriginal groups in the Red River region
- This tobacco was adapted for both chewing and smoking. It was mixed with licorice and molasses and then pressed in an iron mould to make the block shape.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Sinew (imitation)

ACCESSION #: None

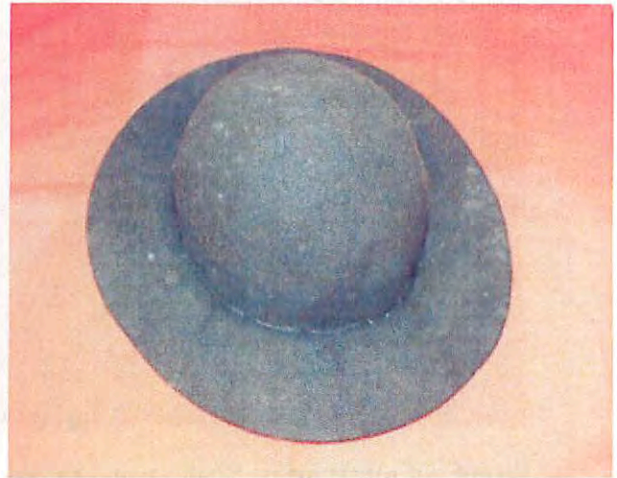
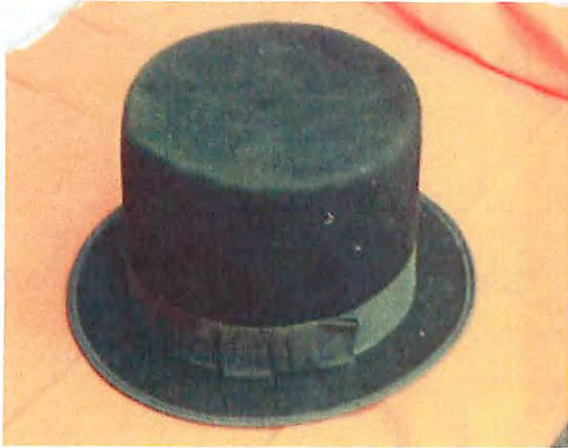
TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Unknown. Real sinew was made from animal tendons.

COMMENTS:

- All-purpose thread used for sewing everything from a tipi cover to repairing moccasins.
- After killing an animal the tendons were cut off the carcass, scraped clean and dried
- When the sinew was needed, it was soaked in water and pulled apart into the thickness needed
- Cotton thread was a popular trade item and replaced sinew for finer sewing



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Hat (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

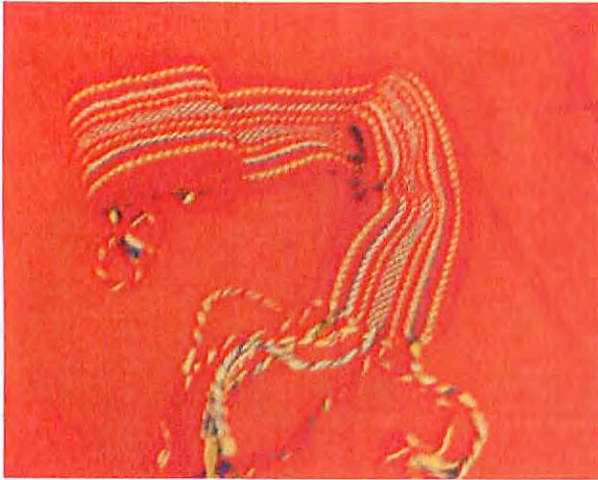
TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Felt

COMMENTS:

- Men's top hats made of beaver felt, like the one on the left, were popular in the mid nineteenth century.
- Simpler styles of men's hats, like the one on the right, were worn about the same time.
- Different styles of hats were worn for different occasions and different purposes



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Ceinture flechée (reproduction))

ACCESSION #: None

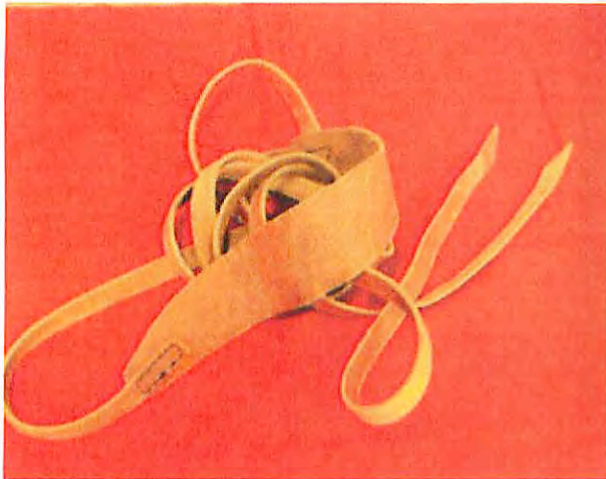
TIME PERIOD: Fur trade (1600 – 1850)

SOURCE: LFG curatorial

MATERIAL:

COMMENTS:

- Early sashes were made individually by finger weaving (a hand weaving technique that does not use a loom) in the village of L'Assomption near Montreal. During the mid nineteenth century they were machine woven in England and imported for the fur trade.
- The sashes were made of wool and were usually 4 to 6 inches wide and 8 to 10 feet long
- When wrapped around the waist several times, the sash provides extra support for the muscles in the back and stomach, preventing individuals from suffering with back problems. The sashes could be folded lengthwise and the serve as a pocket for small items, or items such as knives could be hung from them. The sashes could also be used to secure packs or bales that were carried on the voyageur's back.
- The sash was worn by the French and Métis voyageurs who worked for the Northwest Company and HBC
- Ceinture is French for a sash or belt, and flechée comes from the French work for arrow which describes the design on many of the belts.



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Tumpline (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: HX.R.7517

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Rawhide

COMMENTS:

- Used to secure bales or packs of furs or trade goods being carried on a person's back
- The more a voyageur could carry, the more they would get paid
- The ends of the strap are tied around to the object being carried and the flat piece goes across the forehead



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Moccasins (reproduction)

ACCESSION #: None

TIME PERIOD: Pre contact

SOURCE: Lower Fort Garry

MATERIAL: Leather

COMMENTS:

- A type of foot wear worn by Aboriginal people
- Styles varied from one group to another, and from a male to a female
- This style of moccasin would be worn in the summer. Winter moccasins had animal fur tucked inside for extra warmth, and would be a lot thicker
- The vamp (top) and cuffs (sides) were sometimes decorated with beads or porcupine quills
- Used tanned moose or bison hide because it is tough



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Beaver Pelt

ACCESSION #: H725865.2

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Tanned Beaver pelt

COMMENTS:

- Beaver was the most commonly traded fur during the fur trade
- This is a very small beaver pelt. The larger the beaver fur, the more you would be given in trade value.
- (See beaver information on next sheet)



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Beaver

ACCESSION #: None

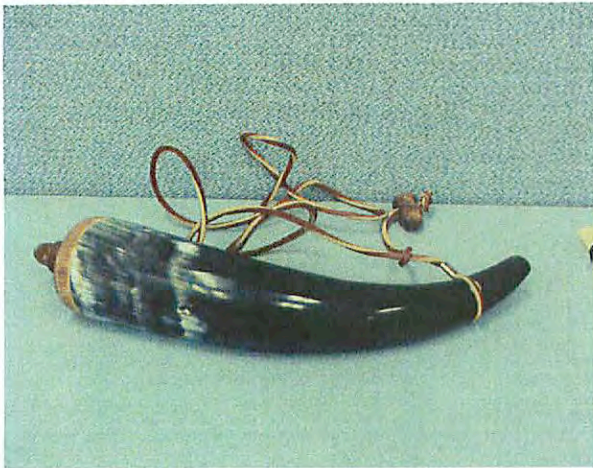
TIME PERIOD: All

SOURCE: Riding Mountain National Park of Canada (Road Kill)

MATERIAL: Stuffed beaver (fake teeth and eyes)

COMMENTS:

- 2nd largest rodent in the world. (1st Capybara in South America)
- Build dams in order to raise water level. It stops water current, provides protection, and helps in the winter time
- Are stimulated to build dams from hearing running water
- Lodges are their homes. Made out of trees and mud
- A beaver colony consists of six or more beavers including, adults, yearlings, and kits
- Use tails for warning enemies. Slap their tail hard against the water to warn other members in their colony. Use tail for support when standing up and cutting down trees
- Unlike humans, their teeth don't stop growing. If a beaver would not be able to chew down trees periodically, their teeth would grow right through their skin. Chewing allows their teeth to slowly grind down
- Grow between 13 kg – 27 kg (27-60 lbs.), 3-4 feet long,
- Usually stay in the water, and they are waterproof. Their body secretes a oily substance that makes their furs resistant to water
- Have a clear eyelid that they use underwater to protect their eyes from debris
- Primarily eat bark, but they also enjoy roots and buds
- Females give birth to one little per year. Can consist of an average of 4 kits but they can have up to 8.
- Stay with parents up to 2 years and then take off and make their own colony
- Nocturnal
- Industrious



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Gunpowder holder

ACCESSION #:

TIME PERIOD: Fur trade

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Bison horns (reproduction)

COMMENTS:

- Used to hold gunpowder
- Worn around the shoulder



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Hide Scraper

ACCESSION #:

TIME PERIOD: Pre-Contact

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Moose bone (reproduction)

COMMENTS:



NAME OF ARTIFACT: Doll

ACCESSION #:

TIME PERIOD: Pre-contact

SOURCE: WCSC

MATERIAL: Reeds, twigs, sticks

COMMENTS:

- Toy for Aboriginal children



NAME OF ARTIFACT:

ACCESSION #:

TIME PERIOD:

SOURCE:

MATERIAL:

COMMENTS: