

Voyageur Program Teachers Packet

These materials are designed to enhance your Voyageur experience. Here is what you will find in this packet:

Welcome!: Overview of your visit

Vocabulary words: Become familiar with these words and how to say them. We will be using them during the program.

Allouette: The song we've known since childhood was popular with the Voyageurs. Time permitting, we will sing this on the boat.

Contract: Do you have what it takes to sign on to be a Voyageur? Most Voyageurs were illiterate. If you couldn't read what it says, would you make your mark?

Bibliography: Would you like to learn more about the Fur Trade? Here are some books to help you on your quest.

Post-trip questions: Here are some questions to keep the students learning after the field trip.

Voyageur Program Time table

*10:00-10:10 am Students together for an Introduction. We then divide into two groups (of about 15 students/2 adults).

10:10-10:45 Rotation 1(Land or Boat)

10:45-11:20 Rotation 2(Land or Boat)

10:20-10:30 Conclusion

11:30-12:00 Lunch

If a second group is involved, they will participate in a program after lunch. A self-led hike is recommended for larger groups, with one group hiking while the other is participating in the Voyageur program. With the two groups switching after lunch.

12:00-12:10 Students together for an Introduction. We then divide into two groups

12:10-12:45 Rotation 1(Land or Boat)

12:45-1:20 Rotation 2(Land or Boat)

1:20-1:30 Conclusion

*Start times vary.

Vocabulary Words:

Voyageur	□One who travels□. Became synonymous with engage.
Engage (en gah jay)	Person employed (engaged) by the fur company as a worker. An engage was illiterate.
Manger du lard (mon jay du lard)	□Pork eater□. Engage who traveled from Montreal in April, through the Great Lakes to forts and trade posts and back to Montreal by the following October.
Bourgeoise (boo jwah)	The boss of the company, the brigade, the boat, or the post. Typically came up through the ranks as an engage and was illiterate.
Chanter (shawn tay)	A singer who lead the songs as they paddled. This person was paid the second highest wages of the engage.
Portage (por taj)	Sometimes the voyageurs needed to cross land to get to the next lake or to avoid rapids, and a portage was made. All the goods and canoe were taken out of the water and carried over land.
Avant (ah vant)	A paddling position in the voyageur canoe. Bow person who was the guide and responsible for watching for rocks, shallows, and other dangers. The Avant may be an interpreter and may be a Metis.
Milleux	A paddling position in the voyageur canoe. These persons paddled in the center section of the canoe and were the lowest paid.
Gouvernail (goo ven ail)	Bourgeois of the boat. The highest paid of the engages.
Montreal Canoe	Generally 34 feet in length, this canoe was made of birch bark by the Algonquin Indians. It was paddled by the Manger du Lard on the Great Lakes to transport furs and trade goods.
Metis (may tee)	Children of a voyageur father and Native American mother.
Allumez (ah loo may)	“Light up”. Voyageurs would paddle for anywhere from 8 to 14 hours a day depending on conditions. A break was taken for ten minutes every 50 minutes when the gouvernail yelled allumez and the engages would stop and smoke one pipe of tobacco.
Tanning	A process of taking an animal skin and chemically treating it to preserve it for another use.
Sinew	Tendon of an animal, pounded and frayed and used as thread, string, etc., depending on diameter.
Extirpation	Species of plant or animal gone from area but not extinct.
Rendezvous	A prearranged meeting and gathering place for the purpose of trade.

Alouette (LARK)

Everybody in Canada, and many people elsewhere, knows “Alouette, gentle alouette.” This song concerns a lark, which is informed by the singer that he will pluck its head, eyes, beak, back, and neck. The song has many more verses than those sung here. Because of its lively tempo, this song was typically sung by the voyageurs as they entered Montreal after a grueling season in the Illinois Country.

CHORUS:

Alouette, gentille alouette,
Alouette, je t’y plumerai

Alouette, gentille alouette,
Alouette, je t’y plumerai
Je t’y plumerai la tete. (Head)
Je t’y plumerai la tete.
Et la tete, et la tete.
Alouette, Alouette, oh!

CHORUS

Je t’y plumerai les yeus. (eyes)
Je t’y plumerai les yeus
Et les yeux, et la les yeux,
Et la tete, et la tete.
Alouette, Alouette, oh!

CHORUS

Je t’y plumerai le bec. (beak)
Je t’y plumerai le bec.
Et le bec, et le bec,
Et les yeux, et la les yeux,
Et la tete, et la tete.
Alouette, Alouette, oh!

CHORUS

Je t’y plumerai le dos
Je t’y plumerai le dos. (back)
Et le dos, et le dos,
Et le bec, et le bec,
Et les yeux, et la les yeux,
Et la tete, et la tete.
Alouette, Alouette, oh!

CHORUS

Je t’y plumerai le cou. (neck)
Je t’y plumerai le cou
Et le cou, et le cou,
Et le dos, et le dos,
Et le bec, et le bec,
Et les yeux, et la les yeux,
Et la tete, et la tete.
Alouette, Alouette, oh!

CHORUS

Villemarie, 5 April 1690

Engagement of _____, as Voyageur to the New Illinois Fur Company.

Before the royal notary, etc., were present the above stated voyageur at present in this city who willingly and voluntarily has agreed and engaged himself to the New Illinois Fur Company, here present and accepting, for a year to go to the Illinois and the Mississippi, to set out from this city at the first request that shall be made to him, to come back next year, commencing from the day of his departure, and to help in taking to the Illinois and Mississippi a canoe loaded with merchandise, and incoming down to help with other men in bringing back a canoe which shall be loaded with twenty-five packets of beaver of the weight of fifty-seven pounds each of which merchandise in going up and of the said beaver in coming down he shall take the best care that he possibly can: and generally to do anything which shall be commanded him that is honest and licit during the said time for the service of the said Company, to seek their profit and warn them of their loss if it comes to his knowledge without being able to quit or abandon the service of the said company during the time except with their consent under penalty of all expenses, damages and interest and other penalties provided by the rules and decision of the Sovereign council of this country.

This bargain is made on the stipulation that the said Company shall furnish provisions to the said voyageur during the said time according to the custom of all voyageurs, and further the sum of 350 livres for this wages and salaries for the said year which the said company promise to pay to the said voyageur on his return to this city in good beaver at the price of the Bureau from the twenty-five packets which he shall help in bringing down; and in case the said packets be lost in coming down from any accident whatever the said shall not be able to pretend to any payment from the other goods of the said Company. The said voyageur shall be permitted to carry in the canoe in which he shall go a gun, a capot, and a blanket which he shall trade for his profit at Michillimackinac and not elsewhere, and the returns which shall come from them he may embark in the canoe in which he shall come down, without paying any transportation. For this promising, obligating himself, renouncing, etc. made and passed at the said Villemarie in the presence of witnesses has undersigned with the said New Illinois Fur Company.

*sealed and accepted _____
for the New Illinois Fur Company*

*signed _____
Voyageur*

Villemarie, le 5 avril 1690

Engagement de M. _____, voyageur a la Societe New Illinois Fur.

Devant le notaire royal, etc., a ete present le voyageur don't le nom apparait cidessus, qui a present se trouve dans cette ville et qui par desir et volontairement est d'accord et il est engage par la Societe New Illinois Fur, ici present et en acceptant d'aller pour un an a l'Illinois et le Mississippi, pour partir de cette ville a la premiere demande pu'on lui fasse, pour revenir l'annee prochaine, a partir de la date de son depart, pour aider apporter un canot charge de marchandise et en aidant d'autres homes pour rapporter un canot charge de vingt-cinq parquets de fourrures de castor avec un poids de cinquante-sept livres chaqu'un, en prenant beaucoup de soin pendant le trajet d'aller et retour dans la mesure de sus possibilities: et generalement de faire ce que lui soit commande, honnete et licite, pendant le susdit temps au service de la susdite Societe, pour chercher leur profit et leur prevenir de leur possible perte s'il enaurait la connaissance sans etre capable de quitter ou d'abandonner le service de la susdite Societe pendant le temps stipule a exception de leur consentement, sous peine d'etre responsable de tous les depense, dommanges, interets, et tous autres punnissements decretes par les lois et decisions du Conseil Souverain de ce pays.

Ce contrat a ete fait sous la stipulation que la susdite Societe doit furnir de provisions au susdit voyageur pendant le temps stipule d'accord a la tradition de tous les voyageurs, en plus la somme de 350 livres pour ses depenses et salaries pour la susdite annee ce que la susdite Societe promets de payer au susdit voyageur a son retour a cette ville. Le susdit voyageur aura le permis de porter dans le canot avec lequel il doit remonter, un fusil, uncapot et une couverture, lesquels il peut vendre pour son profit a Michillimackinac et pas dans un autre lieu, et les profits que doivent venir d'eux il peut les embarquer dans le meme canot qu'il utilise pour retourner sans payer aucune transportation.

Pour cette promesse, il s'oblige, en renoncant, etc., fait et passé a la susdite Villemarie dans le bureau du susdit notaire dans l'annee 1690, le cinquieme dour du mois d'avril devant la presence de tremoins, residant dans la susdite Villemarie, a signe avec la susdite Societe New Illinois Fur.

Accepte _____
sceaux de la Societe New Illinois Fur

signe _____
Voyageur

Bibliography

Beavers: Water, Wildlife & History, Earl L. Hilfiker

With Pipe, Paddle, and Song, Yates, Elizabeth. Library of Congress 68-13418.

The Past & Present of Lake County, Illinois. The City of Waukegan.

Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Lake County

Wilderness at Dawn, Morgan, Ted. 0-671-69088-4.

A Toast to the Fur Trade, Wheeler, Robert C. 0-9614362-0-4

The Broken Blade, Durbin, William, 1997. 0-385-32224-0

The Potawatomi, Clifton, James A., 1987. 1-555-46-725-30

The Time of the French in the Heart of North America 1673 - 1818, Charles J. Balesi.
1-881370-003

The Illinois Country 1673 - 1818, Alvord, Clarence Walworth, 1965. 0-252-01337-9

Voyageur's Sketchbook, Hanson, James A. The Fur Press, 1981.

Gordon S. Hubbard Fur Trader & Chicago Pioneer, Hubbard, Gordon S., 1888. Black Letter Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. ISBN 0-912382-29-5.

Where Two Worlds Meet, The Great Lakes Fur Trade, Gilman, Carolyn. 1982.
ISBN 0-87351-156-5.

Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Lake County, edited by Bateman, Newton, LL.D., Partridge, Hon. Charles A., Selby, Paul, A.M., 1902.

The Past and Present of Lake County, Illinois, Haines, E.M., 1877.

White Oak Society, http://www.northernnet.com/white_oak/LEARNING
LaFete, <http://www.lafete.org>

Post Trip Questions

Fur Trade

- On a map of Canada and the Great Lakes, can you find the waterways followed by the voyageur to get to the trading posts at Michilimackinac, la Baye, Petit Fort?
- Many animals besides the beaver were used in the fur trade. Choose one of these fur bearing mammals as a research project and present it to your class.
- What other fur bearing animals have been killed for their skins?
- What things today are made from skins?
- What kinds of animals are endangered or extinct due to overhunting?
- Are there groups in your community that help protect endangered animals?
- What animal symbols are on United States coin and stamps?
- Can you make a model a beaver lodge?
- Do a project on animal homes.

Rivers

- Look at one major Illinois Rivers. How was the fur trade affected by this river?
- What were the names of the trading posts along your river?
- Where would you have to portage along your river if you were traveling by canoe?
- Plan a trip on your river. At what kinds of places would you stop? Why would you stop there?
- What rivers flow into your river? Does your river flow into another river? An ocean?
- In which direction does your river flow? Where is the source of your river? Where is its mouth?
- What native tribes have traditionally lived along the river?
- What kinds of transportation are used on your river today?
- What kinds of animals live along your river? Name some birds, fish and mammals that you might see.
- Look at one Lake County river. How was the fur trade affected by this river?
- In which direction does your river flow? Where is the source of your river? Where is its mouth?
- What native tribes have traditionally lived along the river?
- What kinds of transportation are used on your river today?
- What kinds of animals live along your river? Name some birds, fish and mammals that you might see.