

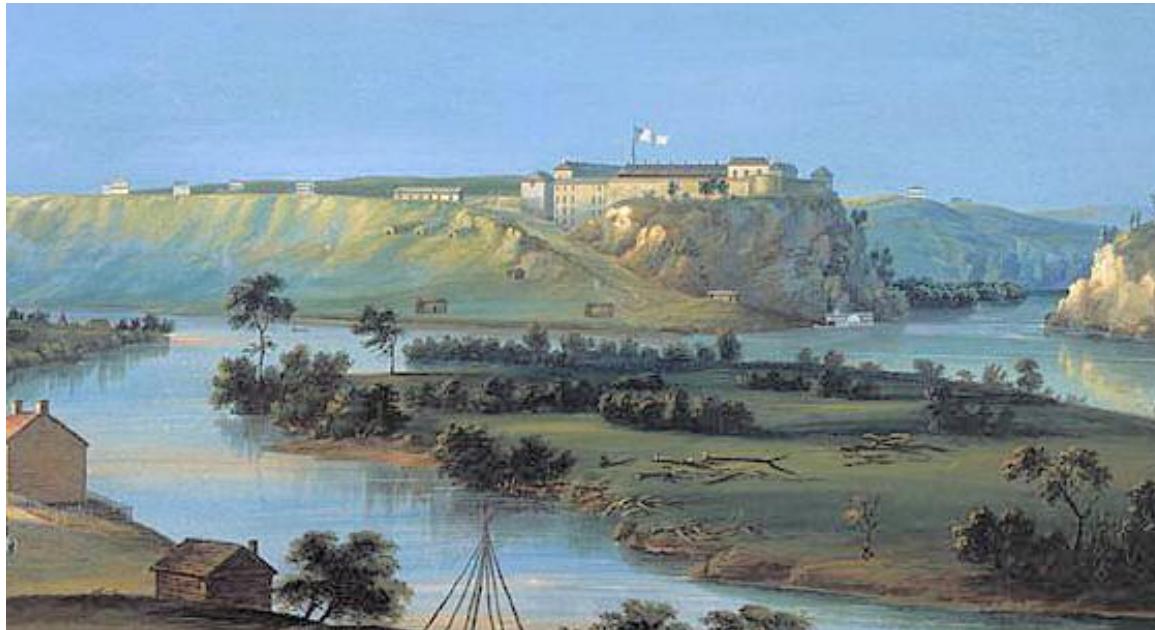
Minnesota's First Industry

Fur Trading

Native Americans traveled and traded with neighboring tribes along waterways that would become Minnesota for centuries prior to the arrival of European settlers in the 1600s.

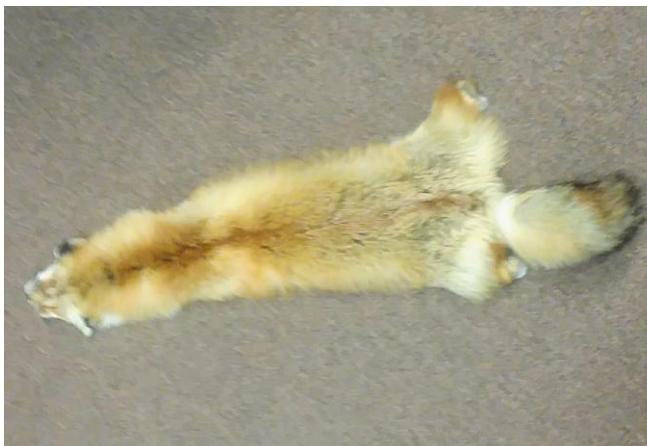


French fur traders ruled the trading industry with Native Americans for almost 200 years. The British defeated the French in the French and Indian War; taking control of the fur trade. Later, the Revolutionary War led to American independence. Fierce competition among the British and American fur trading companies brought even more competition.



Fort Snelling; mid 1840s.

By 1823, the American Fur Company did most of the trading with Native Americans in the area. The American traders provided cooking utensils, guns and ammunition, blankets and metal tools in exchange for valuable furs. These furs were sold to manufacturing companies and used to create clothing and other products. One of the most valuable furs was the beaver fur; used to create hats. Other animals trapped for their fur included the wolf, bear, otter and muskrat, raccoon, coyote, fox and even the skunk!



Images of a fox, coyote, raccoon and skunk pelt; all held in the collection of the Pipestone County Historical Society.



Beaver Fur coat.



Beaver pelt, held in the collection of the Pipestone County Historic Society.



Popular style of beaver fur hat from the mid to late 1800s.



Sadly, competition and over trapping of fur-bearing animals led to the destruction of these animal populations.

The creation of silk and other fabrics also led to the decline of prices for furs. By the 1870s fur trading was a thing of the past.

Links to Educational Activities

The following links contain classroom and supplemental activities that could be utilized to support or supplement lessons related to the fur trade industry.

- <http://education.mnhs.org/sites/default/files/Fur%20Trade%20Teacher%20Guide.pdf>
- https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/education/upload/Ft_Snelling_Classroom_Activities_student.pdf
- <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/edukit - fur trade student guide.pdf>
- <http://www.ojibwe-dakota-in-mn.com/fur-trading.html>

Sources

- <http://whttps://libguides.mnhs.org/furtradeww.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/fur-trade>
- http://www.sciencebuzz.org/museum/object/2008_01_axes/trade
- <http://www.mnhs.org/furpost/learn/fur-trade>
- <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/mn-nwtradingpost/>