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# Did Trade Make Life Better For Indigenous People?



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## Supporting Questions

1. Why did Indigenous People want to trade?
2. Why did the Europeans want to trade?
3. How did trade lead to conflict?

# NORTHERN MICHIGAN INQUIRY HUB

## 3rd Grade Inquiry

Compelling Question	
<b>Michigan Content Expectations:</b>	3-H3.0.4 Draw upon traditional stories of American Indians who lived in Michigan in order to make generalizations about their beliefs. 3-H3.0.5 Use informational text and visual data to compare how American Indians and settlers in the early history of Michigan adapted to, used, and modified their environment. 3-H3.0.6 Use a variety of sources to describe interactions that occurred between American Indians and the first European explorers and settlers in Michigan. 3-H3.0.7 Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to construct a historical narrative about daily life in the early settlements of Michigan. 3-H3.0.8 Use case studies or stories to describe how the ideas or actions of individuals affected the history of Michigan.
<b>Staging the Compelling Question:</b>	Pose the question: What is trade? Watch the following video to introduce the trading dynamics between the Native Americans and the Europeans. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhC4H-x4xH0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhC4H-x4xH0</a> Go back to the question, What is trade? and define with students. Pose the overall question: Did trade make life better for the Native Americans? and gather students' current thoughts on the topic.

Supporting Question 1
Why did Indigenous People want to trade?
Formative Performance Task
Create an infographic or poster explaining why the Native Americans wanted to trade and what they traded for.
Featured Sources
Pete-Na-Wan reading Historical Painting Fur Trade Mitten Article Fur Trade Artifacts Fur Trade Readings

Supporting Question 2
Why did the Europeans want to trade?
Formative Performance Task
Create a comparison infographic explaining why the Europeans wanted to trade and what their motivation was. Use this to compare and contrast with the graphics made for the Native American point of view.
Featured Sources
Early Trade article Fur Trade Article

Supporting Question 3
How did trade lead to conflict?
Formative Performance Task
<b>Caption the picture from the Supporting Question 1 Sources and explain why you captioned it that way.</b>
Featured Sources
Arrival of Whites reading Europeans Battle for Trade French and Indian War Fur Trade Article

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	Argument: Did trade make life better for the Indigenous People? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	-Use Flipgrid responses and/or post-it notes to ask questions of other students' work and further the thinking of others in the class. Use this to further the debate in class. -Create a defense for the opposing side and share it out with the class through an opposite debate, video, or written response.

## Supporting Question 1 - Featured Source A

Pete-Na-Wan, a chief, had a girl six years old who had consumption. She came every day for a long time to see grandmother, who would prepare little delicacies for her. Even after she could not sit up, the Indian would bring her in his arms and let her stay there as long as she liked. I have often heard her speak of their great affection for this child, and how tender and gentle they were with her. Failing to come for several days, she decided one Sunday afternoon to go over to the village. Grandmother said, I told "father" I was afraid Pete-Na-Wan's girl was worse, and we had better go over and see. When we reached the place we found them way off by themselves with the girl in a sort of hammock. He came to us, saying: "Pappoose plenty sick, going to Great Spirit." The squaw sat there crying bitterly. The next morning just at daybreak, I heard someone come in and sit down by the fire. I said: "Hughes, I guess Pete-Na-Wan's girl is dead. I think he is out there." Sure enough, there he sat; would not speak, but marked on the floor, with a stick he had, the shape of a coffin; finally said: "Fix 'em pappoose like Che-mo-ko-man's pappoose." So father went out and nailed together a rough box, and the Indian took it under his arm and disappeared." (5-6)

[http://www.umich.edu/~bhlumrec/programs\\_centers/artsofcitizenshipprogram/www.artsofcitizenship.umich.edu/sos/topics/native/early.html#reminiscences](http://www.umich.edu/~bhlumrec/programs_centers/artsofcitizenshipprogram/www.artsofcitizenship.umich.edu/sos/topics/native/early.html#reminiscences)

## Supporting Question 1 - Featured Source B



## Supporting Question 1 - Featured Source C



The

Mitten

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*The Great Lakes*

## FUR TRADE

Patrick Reed

In the 1600s the French explored the Great Lakes looking for a shortcut across North America. They never found the mythical Northwest Passage. Instead, they found an abundance of fur-bearing animals whose **pelts** were made into hats popular in Europe.

The Great Lakes fur trade was a **barter** system between Europeans and Native Americans. The Europeans offered blankets, guns, hatchets, knives, needles, liquor, and metal cooking pots. The Native Americans offered pelts.

All types of pelts were exchanged, but the most popular was the beaver. A beaver pelt, when properly treated, makes strong and attractive felt cloth. Beaver hats were so popular that the animal had been hunted into extinction in Europe.

The earliest Great Lakes fur traders came to Native American villages with trade goods. As the fur trade pushed farther into the interior of North America, permanent trading posts were built. One of the biggest fur-trading posts was at the Straits of Mackinac.

In the late fall and early winter, Native Americans trapped the animals. In the spring, fur traders left Montreal and headed west to Mackinac

with trade goods. At the same time, the Native Americans took the pelts to Mackinac.

At Mackinac, fur traders and the Native Americans **haggled** over the value of the pelts. Once a deal was completed, pelts were exchanged for trade goods. “Made beaver” was the term used to describe the value of furs. A made beaver was equal to one **prime** beaver pelt. A gun might be worth 14 made beaver or a blanket worth 7 made beaver. After the exchange, the pelts were shipped to Europe to be made into hats.



The fur trade

became so important that France and Great Britain fought wars over the control of North America. After the Americans won independence from Great Britain, the two nations struggled over the North American fur trade.

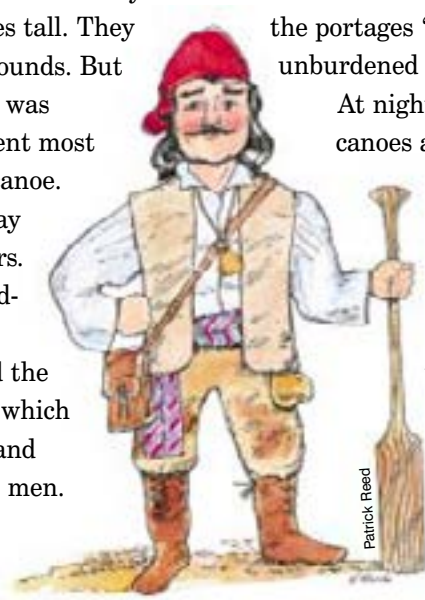
In 1808, German immigrant John Jacob Astor founded the American Fur Company. By the early 1820s, Astor’s company dominated the Great Lakes fur trade. The company, whose headquarters were on Mackinac Island, employed hundreds of workers. In 1834, Astor sold the company and it moved to St. Louis, Missouri.

the VOYAGEUR

**V**oyageurs were the backbone of the Great Lakes fur trade. Voyageurs (a French word meaning *travelers*) were responsible for getting the pelts from the trading posts to Montreal. Voyageurs were usually under five feet, six inches tall. They weighed less than 150 pounds. But they were strong, which was important since they spent most of their day paddling a canoe.

A voyageur's workday lasted up to eighteen hours. When canoeing, they paddled 40 to 60 strokes a minute. They often used the larger Montreal canoes, which were up to 40 feet long and carried a crew of 8 to 10 men.

To help them get through the **monotony** of a long hard day, voyageurs sang songs while they paddled. They also were allowed breaks to smoke their pipes.



When necessary, voyageurs **portaged** the packs of pelts and canoes. Each voyageur carried at least two 90-pound packs of furs. To avoid mosquitoes and black flies they usually moved at a trot. According to one observer, the voyageurs moved along the portages “at a pace which made the unburdened travelers pant for breath.”

At night, the voyageurs pulled their canoes ashore and prepared the day's second meal. Voyageurs ate lots of pemmican, which is a mixture of meat, grease and berries that has great nutritional value. Sometimes there was time for rubbaboo, a thick porridge made from pemmican, water and seasoned with maple sugar. After eating they sat around the fire, smoked their pipe, and “pulled the long bow” (bragging or telling exaggerated stories).

The next morning it was back to paddling.

the BEAVER

**W**ith his sharp teeth and powerful jaws, a beaver can chew through the base of a small tree in a few minutes. A beaver's webbed feet and a powerful tail also make him an excellent swimmer.

A beaver uses the small trees he has cut to build a dam in a small river or stream. When the dam is complete the water backs up and creates a pond. In the middle of the pond the beaver builds his home, called a *lodge*. A lodge is a pile of brush and mud shaped like a flattened cone. The inside is hollow and the beaver enters his home from underwater.

Beavers do not hibernate. They are herbivores (plant eaters) that store food for the winter. Beavers mate in January or February and baby beavers (called kits) are born in the spring. A kit weighs about one pound. An average adult beaver grows to three feet long and weighs 40 pounds.



## Supporting Question 1 - Featured Source D



## Supporting Question 1 - Featured Source E

First, as skilled hunters and suppliers of pelts, the Indians were sought after as trading partners and were exposed to white culture. In exchange for their goods, the Indians received European products, both practical, such as iron tools and utensils, and decorative, such as bright-colored cloth and beads. The Indians also received fire-arms and liquor, both of which had an enormous impact on Indian lifeways. These French goods at first improved the tribes' economic development and military strength, but eventually made many of them dependent on European manufacturing.

In the beginning, the fur trade centered around Canadian settlements near the St. Lawrence River, and the primary trading partners were the Huron tribes. As Europe cried out for more furs, a new breed of men emerged. These were called "voyageurs"-- men who would venture into the wild, untamed land for beaver pelts from the natives. Voyageurs would load up the birch bark canoe with trading goods and supplies. They would take a native guide, and maybe four other men. These fearless paddlers would then head out on the rivers to the north country of the Great Lakes.

With more than one hundred thousand pelts being shipped to Europe each year, the early 19th century saw the beaver headed for extinction. Thankfully, fashion trends were changing in Europe. The silk hat was becoming more fashionable and the demand for beaver pelts almost disappeared.



## Supporting Question 2 - Featured Source A

When the first European explorers came to North America, they hoped to find vast amounts of gold and silver. This was not an unrealistic expectation, for when Hernando Cortes conquered the Aztec Empire in Mexico in 1518 and 1519, he found incredible quantities of precious metals, as did Francisco Pizarro when he conquered the Inca Empire in 1534. A French explorer, Jacques Cartier, explored the St. Lawrence River between 1534 and 1542 and expected to discover similar wealth or at least a waterway to Asia, which possessed valuable spices and silks. He was soon disappointed in both endeavors, for there were no precious metals along the St. Lawrence, nor did it lead to Asia. Nevertheless, the French soon found something that proved to be just as valuable: furs. Europeans used furs in variety of ways. Many garments, especially those of the wealthy, were trimmed with the fur of animals such as fox, ermine, and sable. Europeans learned that beaver fur could be made into felt and fashioned into high hats, which soon became fashionable throughout the continent. Beavers were almost extinct in Europe but were plentiful in North America and possessed high-quality pelts.

### Early Trade

The first Europeans to purchase furs from Indians were French and English fishermen who, during the 1500s, fished off the coast of northeastern Canada and occasionally traded with the Indians. In exchange, the Indians received European-manufactured goods such as guns, metal cooking utensils, and cloth. This trade became so lucrative that many fishermen abandoned fishing and made voyages to North America only to trade in furs,

<http://www.mpm.edu/content/wirp/ICW-146.html>

## Supporting Question 2 - Featured Source B

Why were beaver pelts in such demand? People in Europe did not think of "a beaver" as an animal, but as a hat. The beaver hat was "in fashion", from 1625 to the early 1800's, in most of Europe. People in the 1600's also thought beaver hats held supernatural powers. It was believed that if you rubbed beaver oil onto your hair, it would help your memory. For people suffering from hearing loss, wearing a beaver hat was rumored to improve hearing. Whatever the fancy dressers thought in Europe, the demand for beaver hats was the driving force behind the creation of the colony of New France in Canada. The beaver pelt was the most popular material with which to make these hats. The beaver's fur had two kinds of hair: a short, thick, soft, woolly layer and a longer coarse layer. The coarser long hairs were removed leaving only the shorter woolly layer. The shorter hairs have little barbs on the end, that you can only see under a microscope. When pressed hard, the barbs interlock with each other, making a solid fabric. This process was called "felting". Once felted, the pelt was no longer furry, and was ready to be made into beaver hats.

The most popular furs for making the hats were from the very young beavers. The young beaver kits had the softest and thickest fur for pelting. Beavers do not hibernate, so their fur gets very thick in the winter to keep them warm. Most of the trapping for the beaver was done in the wintertime. Another favorite of traders were beaver pelts that had been worn by the Indians. These furs were worn for approximately a year, until most of the long hairs on the beaver pelt had been worn off. This fur was called "coat beaver", and demanded a very high price on the fur market.

<http://geo.msu.edu/extra/geogmich/furtrade.html>

## Supporting Question 3 - Featured Source A

In many ways, however, the arrival of whites was disastrous for Native Americans. In the 1700s, about two thirds of the native population in Michigan died from diseases whites brought. Tribes lost massive amounts of land to the U. S. Government, for which they were often neither paid nor compensated. By 1820, they had lost claim to over half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Most Native Americans and some whites thought that the government's relations with Native Americans were marked by dishonesty, corruption, and deception. This poem by one local Indian official, Will E. Hampton, indicates such sentiment. By 1838, almost all native villages in Michigan had been abandoned.

Native Americans also grew increasingly distant from native culture under the influence of white schools, missions, and churches. Indian schools like this one, for example, were intended to teach Native American children the ways of whites, including speaking only English. Thousands of Native Americans converted to Christianity and abandoned native practices. Over time their languages, religions, and traditions faded as native peoples became increasingly impoverished.

Despite these losses, however, Native Americans still profoundly affected the history of Michigan and the men and women who settled there. Even today Native American history remains important to the landscape, culture, and politics of Michigan. For example, Native Americans developed a system of trails throughout Washtenaw County to facilitate trade between what is now Michigan and neighboring states. These trails remained major traffic lines throughout the centuries, and today the Great Sauk Trail is highway US-12 and I-94 runs the length of St. Joseph's Trail. Two maps compare Michigan highways to Native American trails.



Native life also affected the geography of the population of Michigan. Several of today's towns, Harbor Springs and Traverse City to name a few, grew up around native villages and the many missions, and schools across Michigan.



## Supporting Question 3 - Featured Source B

### Europeans Battle for Trade

France and England were bitter enemies at this time. Indeed, one of the principal goals of the French fur trade during the 1700s was to maintain strong ties and military alliances with the Indians. Between 1698 and 1763, France and England fought a series of four wars for control of North America. Because the English colonies had a much larger population than New France, the French needed Indian allies to help them fight the English. The Indians continued to trade with the French because they wanted European goods. Despite this, Indian people did not become completely dependent upon European goods as is often believed. They preferred steel arrow points and iron kettles to those made of stone and clay, and muskets to bows and arrows but many of their older, traditional technologies persisted.

The British claimed Canada and the Midwest from the French between 1759 and 1763 in the French and Indian War. With this development, British traders from Canada and even a few American colonials entered the Great Lakes fur trade, although French Canadians continued to constitute the bulk of traders going west. The fur trade in Wisconsin reached its height in the last half of the 1700s because the British had less restrictive trade policies than the French and allowed more people to trade. The most significant trading center in the upper Great Lakes was at the Straits of Mackinac. Most traders in Wisconsin lived at the old French settlements of Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. So many new traders entered the region that cutthroat competition soon became a problem. To curb competition and increase profits, British traders in Canada began to pool their resources. In 1779, the famous North West Company was formed, and in 1798 a rival, the XY Company, arose. Both companies operated posts in northern Wisconsin. In southern Wisconsin, a group of merchants created the Michilimackinac Company in 1806 to monopolize the trade. These British companies were headquartered in Montreal, and sold trade goods on credit and took furs brought in by traders as payment.

## Supporting Question 3 - Featured Source C

The French and Indian War was fought over the fur trade in the Great Lakes. France lost and was forced to turn over the fur trade to England. The primary British trading posts remained at Michilimackinac and Detroit with a smaller post located at St Joseph. England controlled the land until the Revolutionary War. The Treaty of Paris turned over all British lands east of the Mississippi River to the United States of America. The British were not eager to turn over their rich fur trade in the Great Lakes. They kept their posts at Michilimackinac and Detroit until 1796.

## Supporting Question 3 - Featured Source D

A second and devastating effect from trade with whites was the outbreak of European diseases among the Indian population. A third effect was the long-term ecological disruption of the food chain by the depletion of fur-bearing mammals. And finally, the fur trade had another long-term impact on the Indians by bringing whites onto their lands.