

## Chapter 1 : American History USA

*The North American fur trade was the industry and activities related to the acquisition, trade, exchange, and sale of animal furs in North America.*

This was not an unrealistic expectation, for when Hernando Cortes conquered the Aztec Empire in Mexico in 1519 and , he found incredible quantities of precious metals, as did Francisco Pizarro when he conquered the Inca Empire in 1532. A French explorer, Jacques Cartier, explored the St. Lawrence River between 1499 and 1504 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: 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, often before great explorers such as Cartier, Giovanni Caboto John Cabot , Henry Hudson, Giovanni da Verrazzano, and even Christopher Columbus made their famous voyages. Throughout the 1600s, French traders regularly landed their ships at Tadoussac near the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers and traded with Canadian Indians. Many tribes then traded some of these goods with other Indian groups farther into the interior. No Frenchmen resided in Canada at this time, nor were there other European settlements along the northeast coast of North America. The traders simply came to trade and then went back to Europe. Of lesser prominence were the English colonies of New England settled by the Puritans and Pilgrims beginning in the 1600s. Unlike the French and Dutch, the English came to farm rather than trade, but occasionally traded with local Indians as well. The French, on the other hand, traded with the Algonkian-speaking tribes of the St. Wars Disrupt Trade By the 1600s, many areas used by the Iroquois for gathering furs became exhausted. They initiated a series of wars that did not end until 1701, although there were long periods of relative peace during this sixty-year period. Some of the fiercest fighting took place in the late 1600s and early 1700s. The combined forces of the League of the Iroquois destroyed some tribes such as the Erie and scattered others such as the Huron with the goal of monopolizing the Great Lakes fur trade and receiving more trade goods from the Dutch and English. In the course of these wars, many tribes such as the Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Ottawa, Sauk, and Fox were pushed from southern Michigan into Wisconsin. The Iroquois wars were particularly destructive, and many refugee Indians who fled into Wisconsin suffered from starvation and warfare with the two indigenous tribes, the Menominee and Ho-chunk. The Iroquois wars disrupted the flow of furs to the French colony of Quebec. Prior to the wars, the Huron had controlled the trade into the interior of North America, including Wisconsin. The level of trade the Hurons had into the Wisconsin area is unknown, but French sources suggest that the Huron and Ottawa both traded with Wisconsin Indians before any Europeans arrived. Jean Nicolet might have been the first European to arrive in Wisconsin, but he came as a French emissary rather than as a trader. He was followed twenty years later in 1634 by two traders, most likely Medart Chouart, Sieur Des Groseilliers, and his brother-in-law, Pierre-Esprit Radisson. The two men made other voyages as well, and these initiated a period of almost constant contact between French traders and Wisconsin Indians.

*The Mountain Man-Indian Fur Trade site is concerned with the history of the fur trade. Still, the trapping of fur bearing animals was key to the mountain man era and played a significant role in America's western expansion.*

The fur trading industry played a major role in the development of the United States and Canada for more than years. The Indians traded furs for such goods as tools and weapons. Beaver fur, which was used in Europe to make felt hats, became the most valuable of these furs. Today, almost all trappers sell their pelts. Eskimo and Indian trappers in Canada still trade their furs to fur companies for various goods. Trade started after the French offered the Indians kettles, knives, and other gifts as a means to establish friendly relations. The Indians, in turn, gave pelts to the French. This demand encouraged further exploration of North America. Such furs as fox, marten, mink, and otter also were traded. In , the French explorer Samuel de Champlain established a trading post on the site of the present-day city of Quebec. The city became a fur-trading center. The French expanded their trading activities along the St. Lawrence River and around the Great Lakes. They eventually controlled most of the early fur trade in what became Canada. The French traders obtained furs from the Huron Indians and, later, from the Ottawa. These tribes were not trappers, but they acquired the furs from other Indians. The French also developed the fur trade along the Mississippi River. English traders later formed an alliance with the Iroquois Indians and extended their trading area from Maine down the Atlantic Coast to Georgia. It was founded by a group of English merchants, with the help of two French fur traders. The English government gave the company sole trading rights in what is now the Hudson Bay region. This competition, plus other conflicts between the two nations, led to the French and Indian war in . The traders of the new firm were called "Nor Westers. The Russian-American Company was established there in . The Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Ocean in and led to the development of fur trading in the West. Several companies competed heavily for this western trade. Many Indians of the West had little interest in trapping and so the fur-trading companies hired white frontiersmen to obtain pelts. The rendezvous saved the men the time and trouble of traveling long distances to various trading posts. The decline resulted chiefly from the clearing of large areas for settlement. As more and more land was cleared, fur-bearing animals became increasingly scarce. Over trapping of fur-bearing animals hurt the fur trade in the Western United States and Western Canada. By , most fur-trading activity had ended. The fur trade contributed to the development of British and French empires in North America. Traders and trappers explored much of North America in search of fur. They built trading posts in the wilderness, and settlements grew up around many of these posts. Some of these settlements later became such major cities as Detroit, New Orleans, and St. The fur trade led to conflict between France and Great Britain in America. Rivalries over trading alliances also arose among Indian tribes that wanted to obtain European goods. The fur trade promoted friendly relations between the Indians and white traders. However, it also brought Indian hostility toward white settlers because the clearing of land threatened the supply of fur-bearing animals. The claims of fur traders played a part in establishing the border between the United States and Canada. For example, the areas of trade controlled by U.

**Chapter 3 : The Beaver Fur Trade - University of Minnesota Libraries**

*The fur trade is a worldwide industry dealing in the acquisition and sale of animal skins. The establishment of a world fur market in the early modern period, furs of boreal, polar and cold temperate mammalian animals have been the most valued.*

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Beaver Wars initiated by the Iroquois also known as the Haudenosaunee forced a massive demographic shift as their western neighbors fled the violence. They sought refuge west and north of Lake Michigan. In 1649, the Iroquois made a series of raids into Wendake that were intended to destroy the Wendat as a people with thousands of Wendat taken to be adopted by Iroquois families with the rest being killed. Their trading voyage proved extremely lucrative in furs. More importantly, they learned of a frozen sea to the north that provided easy access to the fur-bearing interior. Upon their return, French officials confiscated the furs of these unlicensed coureurs des bois. Radisson and Groseilliers went to Boston and then to London to secure funding and two ships to explore the Hudson Bay. French exploration and expansion westward continued with men such as La Salle and Marquette exploring and claiming the Great Lakes as well as the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. To bolster these territorial claims, the French constructed a series of small fortifications, beginning with Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario in 1673. This new competition directly stimulated French expansion into the North West to win back native customers. On one hand, having the Five Nations at war with other nations prevented those nations from trading with the English at Albany while on the other hand, the French did not want the Iroquois become the only middlemen in the fur trade. Resurgent Iroquoian warfare in the 17th century also stimulated the fur trade as native French allies bought weapons. The new more distant markets and fierce English competition stifled direct trade from the North West with Montreal. The old system of native middlemen and coureurs de bois traveling to trade fairs in Montreal or illegally to English markets was replaced by an increasingly complex and labor-intensive trade network. Licensed voyageurs, allied with Montreal merchants, used water routes to reach the far-flung corners of the North West with canoe loads of trade goods. These risky ventures required large initial investments and had a very slow return. The first revenues from fur sales in Europe did not arrive until four or more years after the initial investment. These economic factors concentrated the fur trade in the hands of a few large Montreal merchants who had available capital. Aboriginal response to French-English competition "over exploitation and depletion of beavers" [edit ] The effect on beaver stocks of competition between the English and the French was disastrous. The status of beavers changed dramatically as it went from being a source of food and clothing for the Aborigines to a vital good for exchange with the Europeans. The French were constantly in search of cheaper fur and trying to cut off the Aboriginal middleman which led them to explore the interior all the way to Lake Winnipeg and the Central Plains. While some historians dispute the claims that the competition was predominantly responsible for over-exploitation of stocks, [26] others have used empirical analysis to emphasize the changing economic incentives for Aborigines and role of the Europeans in the matter. Calvin Martin holds that there was a breakdown of the relationship between man and animal in the values of the Aborigines which made them drastically accelerate the exploitation of reserves. The English organized their trade on strictly hierarchical lines while the French used licenses to lease the use of their posts. This meant that the French incentivized the extension of trade, and French traders did indeed infiltrate much of the Great Lakes region. The increasing penetration near English ports now meant that the Aborigines had more than one place to sell their goods. As competition increased between the English and French in the 17th century, the fur was still predominantly caught by Aboriginal tribes which acted as the middleman. The response to increased competition led to a severe over-harvesting of beavers. While the view that increased competition between the English and the French led to over-exploitation of beaver stocks by the Aborigines does not receive uncritical support, most believe that Aborigines were the primary actors in depleting animal stocks. There is a lack of critical discussion on other factors such as beaver population dynamics, the number of animals harvested, nature of property rights, prices, role of the English and the French in the matter. The primary effect of increased French competition was that the English raised the prices they paid to the Aborigines to harvest fur.

The result of this was greater incentive for Aboriginals to increase harvests. Increased price will lead to a gap between demand and supply and to a higher equilibrium in terms of supply. Data from the trading posts show that the supply of beavers from the Aboriginals was price-elastic and therefore traders responded with increased harvests as prices rose. The harvests were further increased due to the fact that no tribe had an absolute monopoly near any trade and most of them were competing against each other to derive the maximum benefit from the presence of the English and the French. Open access to resources leads to no incentive to conserve stocks, and actors which try to conserve lose out compared to the others when it comes to maximizing economic output. Therefore, there appeared to be a lack of concern by tribes of the First Nations about the sustainability of the fur trade. The problem of over-exploitation is not helped by the fact that the efforts by the French to remove the middlemen such as the Huron who increasingly resented their influence meant that stocks were put under more pressure. All these factors contributed to an unsustainable trade pattern in furs which depleted beaver stocks very fast. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis shows that apart from the settling to a lower level of stable population, further declines were caused by over-harvesting in two of the three English trading posts Albany and York. The data from the third trading post are also very interesting in that the post did not come under French pressure and was therefore shielded from the kind of over-exploitation of stocks which resulted at the other trading posts. At Fort Churchill, the stocks of beaver adjusted to the maximum sustained yield level. The data from Churchill further reinforce the case of over-exploitation of stocks caused by the French-English competition. Radisson was informed by the village elders that he could have sex with any unmarried women in the village provided that he did not trade with the Dakota [Sioux], who were the enemies of the Ojibwa at the time. Having established a relationship with a particular spirit at puberty, women would go on further vision quests throughout their lives with more ceremonies and dreams to continue the relationship. In September, the French diplomat and soldier Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Lhut, called a peace conference at Fond du Lac modern Duluth, Minnesota of all the "nations of the north" which was attended by Ojibwa, Dakota, and Assiniboine leaders, where it was agreed that the daughters and sons of the various chiefs would marry each other to promote peace and ensure the flow of French goods into the region. For the Ojibwa, like the other Indians, saw all life in this world being based upon reciprocal relationships, with Ojibwa women leaving behind "gifts" of tobacco when harvesting plants to thank nature for providing the plants while when a bear was killed, a ceremony was held to thank the bear for "giving" up its life to them. Marie working for the North West Company, later gave an account in her old age of how she came to be married to a British writer named Anna Brownell Jameson. Why are you punishing yourself? Why do you fast? Here is food for you! Also, she dreamed of being on a high hill, which was surrounded by water, and from which she beheld many canoes full of Indians, coming to her and paying her homage; after this, she felt as if she was being carried up into the heavens, and as she looked down on the earth, she perceived it was on fire and said to herself, "All my relations will be burned! She fasted for ten days, during which time her grandmother brought her at intervals some water. The American anthropologist Ruth Landes in her book *Ojibwa Women* described Ojibwa society in the s as based on "male supremacy", and she assumed this was how Ojibwa society had always been, a conclusion that has been widely followed. *Native American Women and the Great Lakes Missions* followed Leacock by arguing that exposure to the patriarchal values of ancien regime France together with the ability to collect "surplus goods" made possible by the fur trade had turned the egalitarian Ojibwa society into unequal society where women did not count for much. The harsh terrain imposed a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle on the people living there as to stay in one place for long would quickly exhaust the food supply. Perry suggested that under the impact of the fur trade that certain misogynistic tendencies that were already long established among the Northern Athabaskan peoples became significantly worse. No persons in this country are so proper for this work as the women, because they are inured to carry and haul heavy loads from their childhood and to do all manner of drudgery". In this way, the fur trade empowered Cree and Ojibwa women while reducing the Northern Athabaskan women down to a slave-like existence. The newly formed United States began its own attempts to capitalize on the fur trade, initially with some success. By the s the fur trade had begun a steep decline, and fur was never again the lucrative enterprise it had once been.

**Chapter 4 : The French Fur Trade | Native American Netroots**

*The Economic History of the Fur Trade: to Ann M. Carlos, University of Colorado Frank D. Lewis, Queen's University Introduction. A commercial fur trade in North America grew out of the early contact between Indians and European fisherman who were netting cod on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland and on the Bay of Gaspé near Quebec.*

Last Edited September 19, For nearly years, from the early 17th to the midth centuries, the fur trade was a vast commercial enterprise across the wild, forested expanse of what is now Canada. Beavers are superb swimmers, and can stay under water for 15 minutes Corel Professional Photos. Library and Archives Canada, Acc. Nicholas Isawanhanhi, Huron chief, shown wearing the regimental coat commonly awarded to native trading captains during the fur trade. Fort William, Ontario, was the centre of the northwestern fur trade courtesy Ontario Ministry of Tourism. Sustained primarily by the trapping of beavers to satisfy the European demand for felt hats, the intensely competitive trade opened the continent to exploration and settlement, financed missionary work, established social, economic and colonial relationships between Europeans and Indigenous people , and played a formative role in the creation of Canada. Fishing, Furs and Christianity: Early Euro-Indigenous Relations The fur trade began as an adjunct to the fishing industry. Early in the 16th century fishermen from northwest Europe were taking rich catches of cod on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St Lawrence see History of Commercial Fisheries. Drying their fish onshore took several weeks, during which time good relations had to be maintained with Indigenous people, who were eager to obtain metal and cloth goods from the Europeans. What they had to offer in exchange were furs and fresh meat. The fishermen found an eager market in Europe for the furs and made high profits. When the wide-brimmed felt hat came into fashion later in the 16th century, the demand for beaver pelts increased tremendously. The best material for hat felt was the soft underfur of the beaver, the strands of which had tiny barbs that made them mat together tightly. The following year, the Dutch began trading up the Hudson River and in established permanent trading posts at Manhattan and upriver at Orange what is now Albany, New York. This activity marked the beginning of intense rivalry between two commercial empires, and between their respective Indigenous allies, the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee , both of whom were supplied with guns by their European allies. Indigenous peoples were important partners in this growing fur trade economy. From roughly to , the French forged alliances of kinship and trade with the Huron-Wendat , Algonquin and Innu. These peoples helped the French to collect and process beaver furs, and distribute them to other Indigenous groups throughout their vast trade network, which was established well before the arrival of Europeans to North America. The fur trade provided Indigenous peoples with European goods that they could use for gift-giving ceremonies, to improve their social status and to go to war. The French forged military alliances with their Indigenous allies in order to maintain good trade and social relations; in the 17th century, they fought against the Haudenosaunee in the struggle for control over resources, known as the Beaver Wars or the French and Iroquois Wars. During the first half of the 17th century, the number of traders flooding into the St Lawrence River region, and cutthroat competition among them, greatly reduced profits. In an attempt to impose order, the French Crown granted monopolies of the trade to certain individuals. In return, the monopoly holders had to maintain French claims to the new lands and assist in the attempts of the Roman Catholic Church to convert Indigenous people to Christianity. Missionaries were sent out: A mission base, Ste Marie Among the Hurons , was established among the Huron -Wendat near Georgian Bay, but the Huron-Wendat were more interested in the trade goods of the French than in their religion. And it was fur-trade profits that sustained the missionaries and allowed the company to send hundreds of settlers to the colony. Unfortunately, they proved to be inept administrators, and fur-trade returns fluctuated wildly. Finally, after a desperate appeal by the colonial authorities to Louis XIV, in the Crown took over the colony. French Control and French Profits The main staple of the trade was still beaver for the hat industry. All permanent residents of New France were permitted to trade for furs with Indigenous people, but they had to sell the beaver and moose hides to the company at prices fixed by the Ministry of Marine. All other furs were traded on a free market; thus the trade was not a monopoly, but the law of supply and demand had been suspended

for beaver and moose hides. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the French minister of marine, hoped to see the Canadian economy diversified to produce raw materials for French industry, particularly timber, and minerals and foodstuffs for the West Indies plantations. Colbert discovered that a sizable proportion of the young men did not remain on the land but disappeared for years to trade with Indigenous people in distant villages see Coureurs de bois. The main reasons for this phenomenon were the assured profits in the trade and the imbalance of the sexes in the colony, which was so great that until about 1700, only about one man in seven could hope to find a wife -- a necessity on a farm. In the interior, however, the traders quickly formed alliances with Indigenous women, whose economic skills helped the French adapt to wilderness life. Women made clothing and moccasins and helped to supply the fur trade posts. Most importantly, they fostered kinship ties between Europeans and Indigenous peoples, linking the two groups in more than just trade and economy. France, England and Indigenous People The order to abandon the western trading posts to slow the migration of men into the beaver trade, and to reduce the glut of pelts was given while England and France were at war and the Canadians were engaged in a desperate struggle with the English colonies and their Haudenosaunee allies. The French feared that these peoples would become allies of the English. New France would be doomed. The minister of marine was obliged to rescind his drastic orders and the beaver trade resumed in spite of the over-supply, for purely political reasons. In 1763, on the eve of new hostilities, Louis XIV ordered the establishment of the new colony of Louisiana on the lower Mississippi River, plus settlements in the Illinois country and a garrisoned post at Detroit. The aim was to hem in the English colonies between the Allegheny Mountains and the Atlantic. This imperialist policy depended on the support of the First Nations. This effectively ended the Beaver Wars over the fur trade. By that time, however, the wars had already resulted in the permanent dispersal or destruction of several First Nations in the Eastern Woodlands, including the Huron-Wendat. Voyageurs In 1763, it was discovered that rodents and insects had consumed the glut of beaver fur in French warehouses. The market immediately revived. As an item on the balance sheet of French external trade, furs were minuscule, and their share was shrinking proportionately as trade in tropical produce and manufactured goods increased; however, the fur trade was the backbone of the Canadian economy. Unlike the HBC with its monolithic structure staffed by paid servants, in New France the trade was carried on into the early 18th century by scores of small partnerships. As costs rose with distance, the trade came to be controlled by a small number of bourgeois, who hired hundreds of wage-earning voyageurs. Most companies consisted of three or four men who obtained from the authorities the lease on the trade at a specific post for three years; all members shared profits or losses proportional to the capital subscribed. For those who paddled the canoes westward in the spring and returned with the autumn convoy, the usual wage was livres plus their keep about double what a labourer or artisan would earn in the colony. Educated Frenchmen were keenly interested in scientific inquiry, and government members, eager to discover the extent of North America, wished a Frenchman to be the first to find an overland route to the western sea see Northwest Passage. They were given command of vast western regions some of which overlapped territory claimed by the British, with sole right to the fur trade. Out of their profits they had to pay the expenses of maintaining their posts and sending exploration parties west along the Missouri and Saskatchewan rivers. The Crown thereby made the fur trade pay the costs of its pursuit of science, and also maintained control over both its subjects in the wilderness and its alliances with the First Nations in order to exclude the English. By 1763, when war with England put a stop to exploration, the French had reached the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Warfare between the Blackfoot and Cree prevented further advances. They had many advantages: Attempts by the English of the Thirteen Colonies to obtain more land for settlement angered the Indigenous people. The French did not covet Indigenous lands, but were determined to deny them to the English. The HBC traders made no real attempt to push their trade inland. Instead, they waited in their posts for Indigenous people to come to them. The First Nations were astute enough to play the English and French against each other by trading with both. The French dared not try to prevent Indigenous people from taking some furs to the Bay, but made sure to obtain the choice furs, leaving only the bulky, poor-quality ones to their rivals. In this way the Canadians obtained a good supply of strouds coarse English woollen cloth, a favourite English trade item. The First Nations people had to be kept supplied, but the volume of exported furs steadily declined. Rise of the North West Company

At the time of the Conquest, over the period, two systems dominated the commercial fur trade of the northern half of the continent: The new "pedlars" forged a new commercial link with London. For their part, the pedlars learned that co-operation among themselves, rather than competition, was the road to commercial success. The resulting North West Company NWC rose rapidly to a position of dominance by gaining a de facto monopoly of the trade in the fur-rich area around Lake Athabasca. Staple fur beaver and fancy furs mink, marten, fisher, etc., unsurpassed in quality and number, assured handsome profits in spite of the high costs of the necessarily labour-intensive transportation system, the canoe brigade. The annual dash of brigades from Fort Chipewyan to Grand Portage later to Fort William on Lake Superior created much of the romantic image of the fur trade. The HBC lacked personnel and equipment equal to the tasks of inland travel and trade. Wintering partners participated in decision making and enjoyed the profits of the trade. But the NWC met its challenge and in absorbed this upstart. These men, new to the company, emphasized efficiency in the trading process as the means to reduce costs and turn from loss to profit. Success in this endeavour led the company to attempt to invade the Athabasca country in 1793. Such occurrences led the British government to demand that the competing fur companies resolve their differences. In 1793 the two companies created the "Deed Poll," a document which outlined the terms of a coalition between them, detailed the sharing of the profits of the trade between the shareholders and individual officers in the field, and explained their relationship in the management of the trade. It was in this manner as well as in the sharing of profits that elements of the NWC survived in the new HBC, although what was a coalition in name became absorption by the HBC in fact when, in 1793, the board of management was eliminated. The victorious HBC once again sought to increase its efficiency. But such profits required a constant monitoring of costs and a constant search for savings, as well as a policy of sharp competition with rivals in border areas. In times of adversity the company offered medical services and sufficient supplies and provisions for the trapper and his family to survive. Such a vast fur domain attracted rivals. On the Pacific coast he reached an agreement with the Russian Fur Company permitting the HBC to pursue the maritime trade and successfully challenge the pre-eminence of the Americans. South and east of the Columbia River, he encouraged expeditions to trap the region clean in a "scorched-earth" policy that left no animals to attract American "mountain men" or trappers. Farther east, the opponents were more difficult to dislodge. Even when, in the 1790s, silk replaced felt as the favoured raw material in the manufacture of hats and beaver lost its value as a staple fur, the company maintained a profitable trade emphasizing fancy fur. Instead, it was settlement, not commercial rivals, that presented the biggest challenge to the company. Although the company won a legal victory in the courtroom, the community believed that the free traders had been exonerated. Simpson countered brilliantly by making his company an important supplier of goods needed by the lumber crews. When the geographical isolation of the West was breached in the 1790s, forces other than the fur interests became involved in opening the "Great Lone Land. They were followed by adventurers and government expeditions see the Palliser Expedition seeking resources other than fur: The year after, the federal government began signing treaties with the Indigenous peoples of the area, thereby acquiring title to those traditional lands and opening them up to settlement and development see Numbered Treaties. What had been a trickle of settlers coming from Ontario now became a flood. As settlement spread north and west, the HBC and rival free traders intensified the northward push of the trade, and eventually established enduring trading contacts with the Inuit.

**Chapter 5 : The Fur Trade | Historic Fort Snelling | MNHS**

*The fur trade was a period of cultural and economic exchange between Native Americans and European Americans. Fort Snelling was partly established to secure US influence in the region's fur trade economy.*

One party or the other was unfaithful, or dishonest, or hygienically challenged, or possessed of a knife collection that includes more knives than you feel necessary. Both books are commendable, well-written, peppered with enjoyable anecdotes. However, the highest praise I can come up with is that his books are just fine. First, the time covered time period starts with the early exploration of America and ends well before the 20th century. The slaughter of seals is given one chapter, and the massacre of buffalo another, briefer chapter. On the whole, this is a beaver book. At this point, I should mention that I am not unaware of the potential jokes that could be made, only that I have chosen to save those jokes for other venues. Dolin tells his story in three parts. In this section, Dolin tries to show “ with some success ” that it was the lure of furs that drew European attention to America. During this time period, the formation and expansion of the United States gradually forced the French from the fur trade, and greatly circumscribed the dealings of the British. Part III tells the story of the period most people associate with the American fur trade: The difficulty in writing a book like this is that you are telling the story of an industry, not relating an event or series of events. There are really only two ways to go about doing this. First, you write it like any other history book, except that events are told from the viewpoint of, and analyzed for their effect on that particular industry. This gives you the general overview of things. Second, you can highlight individual stories to give the reader a flavor of how the industry operated. Dolin tries to do a bit of both. Essentially, he gives the reader a brief primer on early American history that is peppered with quotes about the fur trade. The problem is that this story has already been told, and told better, with more detail, in hundreds of other books. For instance, Dolin spends a lot of time on the Pilgrims. While they sometimes engaged in the fur trade, that was only a secondary feature of their settlement their primary purpose being the consumption of turkey and the wearing of buckled hats. I had the feeling of treading familiar ground throughout *Fur, Fortune, and Empire*. Every author has a tendency to overemphasize his or her subject. Dolin is not immune to this. He tries to frame the fur trade as a motivator for western expansion, but undercuts his own position by acknowledging that it never accounted for a large percentage of the American economy. What the trade really amounted to though for some reason, Dolin spends very little time on it is a case study in the dangers of laissez faire capitalism. A small group of men grew very wealthy, at little personal risk; the rich got to buy fancy hats; the traders were cheated and never made a profit; and a number of ecosystems were destroyed. Where Dolin succeeds is in the second half of the book, in detailing the adventures and travails of the American mountain men. It sounds more fun than it actually was. The one area in which Dolin adds something unique is in his understanding of the animals that were being trapped and killed. As he did with Leviathan, Dolin does a good job describing his central character, in this case, the beaver. Coming into this book, my knowledge of the beaver was limited to homespun aphorisms and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In other words, I was under the impression that beavers were workaholics, and also that beavers could talk and help little girls undertake magical quests. Dolin helped to expand my knowledge of this bucktoothed little creature, and also gave me one indelible image: Alone or sometimes in pairs, the beaver sets to work with its powerful incisors, gnawing, cutting, and chipping away the wood near the base of the tree in a V-shaped pattern, often laboring for hours at a time, until the tree is left balancing precariously on a narrow point or wedge of wood, often no thicker than a pencil. With one more cut or a providential gust of wind, the connecting wood fibers rupture as the tree begins to fall. Some people claim that beavers can predict which way a tree will fall, or that they cut the trees so that it falls in the direction of their choosing. This is not true, and a small number of beavers are so clueless on this account that, failing to get out of the way of the crashing lumber, they end up serving as their own executioners, crushed to death by the tree they have just felled. As I noted above, there is nothing really wrong with this book. It is fine, from start to finish. However, as a rule, I will never pay for oatmeal. On the other hand, if you are going to purchase a book covering the same topics, it might be worthwhile going elsewhere.

**Chapter 6 : History of the Fur Trade**

*The Fur Trade. The fur trade was one of the earliest and most important industries in North America. The fur trading industry played a major role in the development of the United States and Canada for more than years.*

European control over the continent and the trade gradually waned by the end of the eighteenth century, and after the Louisiana Purchase , the Lewis and Clark expedition , and the War of , the stage was set for Americans to appropriate the West. From the s through the s the fur trade remained a major economic stimulus for exploration and expansion, and it would continue to be the primary basis for interaction with native peoples. It would also generate a mythic American figure, the mountain man, and make its presence strongly felt in Romantic literature and art. John Jacob Astor, a New York fur merchant who would eventually become the richest man in America, founded with government encouragement the Pacific Fur Company in . By sea, he established a trading post, Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River in what is now Oregon and sent a party up the Missouri River and across the Rocky Mountains to rendezvous with the men at Astoria. Their principal rival during the heyday of the trade was the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, begun by William Ashley of Missouri, which often surpassed the American Fur Company in entrepreneurial energy and efficiency. Each summer all parties gathered at a rendezvous in the mountains—part bacchanal, part trade fair—where furs would be collected and supplies distributed for the following season. This system prevailed until the s, when over-trapping and a drop in fur prices on the global market caused the industry to decline. There were two aspects of the American fur trade in the first half of the nineteenth century that helped to metamorphose what was essentially a brutal and exploitative economic activity into the stuff of legend and popular literature. The first was its setting: This rugged and largely unexplored landscape, ranging from northern New Mexico to Montana, fueled a Romantic passion for the sublime, for wilderness in its most extreme, inaccessible, and even dangerous manifestations. Where earlier generations had found beauty in the garden and the cultivated landscape and regarded mountain chains as barriers to trade and as unfit for agriculture, the literary and aesthetic taste of the nineteenth century favored the snowcapped mountain, the barren desert, and the rushing waterfall as sites of primal struggle, contemplation, and even spiritual fulfillment. The second factor that lent itself to mythologizing was the shift from an Indian-based trapping economy to a white-based one. The Europeans had generally acted as merchants and middlemen, relying on the Indians as a kind of native worker class who would bring their furs to trading posts to exchange for European goods. When Americans began pushing toward the headwaters of the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains to prosecute the fur trade, they did so not only as traders but also as trappers and as year-round residents rather than occasional visitors. The activity of trapping itself—as opposed to merely trading—brought the mountain men , as they came to be called, into the rugged and romantic landscape of the mountains and also into competition and conflict with the various tribes that claimed these lands as home and hunting grounds. The situation was full of danger and ambiguity for both parties: The Indians, resenting and resisting this intrusion and appropriation of resources by ever-increasing numbers of Americans, often fought back by stripping the isolated trappers of their pelts and equipment or even killing them. At the same time, they desired and became increasingly dependent on manufactured goods and could not afford to alienate the suppliers who established trading posts and conducted the annual rendezvous where furs were exchanged. The white trappers, for their part, were in constant danger of attack, especially from small bands of hunters and warriors roaming outside tribal control. At the same time, their success depended upon their ability to assimilate themselves into native cultures. They adopted the dress and way of life of the Indians and frequently married or at least lived with Indian women. Published in , it sold over 65, copies within a few months. Their lives being spent in the remote wilderness of the mountains, with no other companion than Nature herself, their habits and character assume a most singular cast of simplicity mingled with ferocity, appearing to take their colouring from the scenes and objects which surround them. Knowing no wants save those of nature, their sole care is to procure sufficient food to support life, and the necessary clothing to protect them from the rigorous climate. This with the assistance of their trusty rifles, they are generally able to effect, but sometimes at the expense of great peril and hardship. When engaged in

their avocation, the natural instinct of primitive man is ever alive, for the purpose of guarding against danger and the provision of necessary food. Keen observers of nature, they rival the beasts of prey in discovering the haunts and habits of game, and in their skill and cunning in capturing it. Constantly exposed to perils of all kinds, they become callous to any feeling of danger, and destroy human as well as animal life with as little scruple and as freely as they expose their own. Of laws, human or divine, they neither know nor care to know. Their wish is their law, and to attain it they do not scruple as to ways and means. Firm friends and bitter enemies, with them it is "a word and a blow," and the blow often first. They may have good qualities, but they are those of the animal; and people fond of giving hard names call them revengeful, bloodthirsty, drunkards when the wherewithal is to be had, gamblers, regardless of the laws of meum and tuum—in fact, "White Indians. Their animal qualities, however, are undeniable. Strong, active, hardy as bears, daring, expert in the use of their weapons, they are just what uncivilized white man might be supposed to be in a brute state, depending upon his instinct for the support of life. Not a hole or corner in the vast wilderness of the "Far West" but has been ransacked by these hardy men. From the Mississippi to the mouth of the Colorado of the West, from the frozen regions of the North to the Gila in Mexico, the beaver-hunter has set his traps in every creek and stream. All this vast country, but for the daring enterprise of these men, would be even now a terra incognita to geographers, as indeed a great portion still is; but there is not an acre that has not been passed and repassed by the trappers in their perilous excursions. The mountains and streams still retain the names assigned to them by the rude hunters; and these alone are the hardy pioneers who have paved the way for the settlement of the western country. John Murray, pp. Many of the men who were drawn to the trade were frontiersmen already accustomed to pushing west into remoter lands and already the subject of legend as hunters, scouts, and Indian fighters. But by the last book chronologically in the series, *The Prairie*, Natty dies far out on the western plains after living his last years as a trapper. The mountain men in turn often became scouts and guides for the army after the heyday of the fur trade and thus prolonged their legends into a new era; the most famous of these was Kit Carson, who became a guide to John C. The fur trade also figured prominently in many works of autobiography and nonfiction, some of which have become at least minor classics of American literature. The most interesting as well as the most sensational autobiography is *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*, which was edited and doubtless embellished by T. Bonner, a New York editor. Beckwourth was an African American born in Virginia who ran away to the West and became one of the most prominent mountain men as well as a chief in the Crow tribe. There were a number of British travelers and adventurers who produced accounts of time spent with the trappers and Indians. The fur trade, the mountain men, and their Indian adversaries are also featured prominently in important nonfiction works about the West from the and s: But by far the most ambitious attempt by a major writer to memorialize the fur trade and its participants was that of Washington Irving in his two volumes *Astoria*, revised and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*. As heroic figures, the latter themselves were supplanted after the Civil War by the cast of characters who people the western. Still, they lived on throughout the twentieth century in popular fiction such as A.

**Chapter 7 : Fur Trading on the Frontier – Legends of America**

*The fur trade in Wisconsin reached its height in the last half of the 18th century 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.*

This is a brief description of the most significant events in the years during which the fur trade flourished. By 1763, the fur trade had mostly come to an end, but not for the reasons you might assume. They traded with the natives they met. They traded knives, hatchets, and beads to the Indians for fur and meat. Indian trappers brought furs from the interior to the St. Lawrence River and traded there for manufactured goods from Europe. These goods included iron tools, wool blankets, colorful cloth, and guns. He sent Etienne Brule to live with the Huron Indians, to learn their language and trade routes. Champlain was the first to realize the great trade potential of the birch bark canoe. He may have reached the western shores as well. He was on a quest for a route to the Far East. He claimed all the land in this area for France. These furs were mainly supplied by Indian traders, especially the Huron and Ottawa tribes. In Wisconsin the Winnebago tribes blocked the fur trade routes. They were attacked and defeated by the Ottawa and Huron. New tribes such as the Sauk, Fox, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe began moving into the area that is now Wisconsin. They built a trading post at Chequamegon Bay on Lake Superior and claimed to have found a portage into the west. Could this have been Grand Portage? They claimed all the lands that drained into Hudson Bay as their trading area. Their post were located on Hudson Bay and the Indians brought their furs there. After this time many Frenchmen moved into the region and began trading directly with the Indians. After this the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers became a major transportation route to the western trading regions. He claimed all the lands for France. He returned to Lake Superior and traveled up the northwest shore and built a post on the Kaministikquai River. The Ojibwe were moving from eastern Lake Superior to the area around Chequamegon. They took the place of the departed Huron and Ottawa. They even allied themselves with the Dakota with whom they traded goods. He claimed all the lands drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries for France. It interrupted trade as far west as Minnesota. Trade was officially abandoned for 20 years. Illegal traders kept up their operations, however. The Fox closed the trading route of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. Trade throughout the upper Mississippi region was disrupted. The Fox had nearly been exterminated by the French and their Indian allies. The trade routes reopened, but changes had occurred. Indian middlemen traders were eliminated. Trade goods were carried west by licensed traders and brought directly to the Indians. The truce between the Ojibwe and Dakota was broken. The Dakota had previously allowed the Ojibwe to hunt on their lands and in exchange the Dakota had allowed trade goods to travel through to the Ojibwe. Now the Dakota had direct access to the trade goods and no longer needed the Ojibwe. An attempt was made to push the Ojibwe off Dakota lands, but within 50 years the Ojibwe succeeded in driving the Dakota out of their eastern woodlands. Most of the licensed traders and their voyageurs were called east to fight the British. All trading rights and privileges became British. Furs were now sent to London instead of Paris and most trade goods were supplied through London Agents. In spite of this, unlicensed traders continued to operate. The start of unregulated trade increased the use of liquor in the fur trade. British traders were allowed to establish wintering posts amongst the Indians. Construction began on permanent structures at Grand Portage. The western Great Lakes and all land north of the Ohio River became part of Quebec and subject to its laws and regulations. Green Bay and Prairie du Chein became interior trading centers. Traders started to exploit the region northwest of Grand Portage, but cut-throat competition reduced the profits. Small partnerships were formed to avoid or oppose the competition. The American Revolution caused some traders to avoid areas south and west of the Great Lakes and encouraged them to go north and west. Hudson Bay Company built a post on the Saskatchewan River. Peter Pond traveled to the Athabaska where he gathered so many furs he was forced to leave some behind. The Dakota and Ojibwe were fighting for control of the St. Croix Valley so traders avoided those areas. A small pox epidemic killed thousands throughout the Northwest. There were 16 shares in the company. Simon McTavish and the Frobisher brothers hold six shares. The first meeting of the Montreal partners and their winterers was held that

summer at Grand Portage. It was a very selective social organization of men who had wintered in Indian country. There were 19 original members. Simon McTavish tried to lease transportation rights through Hudson Bay but was refused. Jean Baptiste Perrault entered the Fon du Lac with six other traders in a two-year partnership. They built posts on the St. John Sayer joined a one-year partnership and built a post on the St. The first year they traded at Leech Lake and the following year at Red River. They went north and then back to Grand Portage. The route that he had discovered was so bad that it was little used in the future. The treaty also opened New York for direct shipment of furs from Detroit and Michilimackinac. John Jacob Astor became involved in the fur trade. Mackenize did not agree with some of the policies of McTavish. Subsequently the XY Company formed from several existing companies. McTavish ordered all his departments to undersell the XY traders. This in turn increased the use of rum, tobacco, blue or red laced and braided coats which the chiefs desired and the practice of trading with the Indians during drinking bouts. The Lewis and Clark expedition left in search of a passage to the Pacific Coast. The United States took back lands that had been occupied by the British, but tensions still continued. After this the United States forbid any foreign traders to operate in American territory. The North West Company withdrew. The American Fur Co. A border war began between the North West Co. He continued working for them until A major factor in the decision to merge was the high transportation costs shipping through the Great Lakes. In addition, the Hudson Bay Co. After this time, most trade goods were shipped through Hudson Bay for the interior posts. The border war still continued between the Hudson Bay Co. It did not end until when the American Fur Co. Ramsey Crooks now operated the company. American Fur had a monopoly in the Fon du Lac, but due to expenses, cut the number of its posts in the region by half. The Ojibwe were supposed to move to the Crow Wing River. However, some family groups remained in the St. Lumbering started in the St. The Northern Outfit was reorganized and Dr. Borup supervised the area from La Pointe. The Ojibwe in the area are divided, some retaining traditional life styles, others adopting the agricultural life style recommended by the missionaries. Ramsey Crooks kept control of the Northern Outfit, but now traded with both Indians and whites. The white population was rapidly increasing in the St. Trade companies invested in lumbering, banking, general merchandising, steamboats and land speculation.

**Chapter 8 : The Economic History of the Fur Trade: to**

*The Museum of the Fur Trade, standing on the site of the James Bordeaux's trading post that was established for the American Fur Company in , began as a plan - at the time, only a dream - in the minds of its founders.*

They viewed Indians as trading partners, as important elements in acquiring the furs which would generate great wealth. Following the system of rivers and lakes, French traders using Indian canoes penetrated deep into North America. To be successful, the French traders learned Indian languages, often dressed in Indian style, and married Indian women. The fur trade in the seventeenth century was globalized: To obtain the furs, the traders imported European manufactured goods which the Indians wanted. Over the centuries, the primary engine of globalization has been the transnational corporation. The French trading strategy was to travel inland, using Indian canoes to follow the lakes and rivers to the Indian villages. The French wanted to establish firm, long-lasting trading alliances and so they spoke the Native languages. They also recognized that there were traditional ceremonial preludes to trading and they were willing to participate in them. The French traders usually lived in the Indian villages, so they also dressed in an Indian fashion: They recognized the importance of family relationships in trading networks, so they often married Indian women and were adopted into Indian families. The marriages between the French traders and Indian women often resulted in children. The alliances between the French and the Indian nations were often more than just trade agreements. In , the French promised the Montagnais that they would help them in their on-going struggle against the Iroquois Confederacy. The French provided the Montagnais with weapons other than guns and the Montagnais blocked the Iroquois expansion into the Saint Lawrence area. In , the French established a formal trading alliance with the Huron Confederacy. Once again they had allied themselves with enemies of the Iroquois Confederacy. The following year, the French joined with a joint Huron and Algonquin raiding party against the Iroquois. While the French viewed the war as a failure as it did defeat the Iroquois, it reinforced their alliance with the Huron. In , the Iroquois sent ambassadors to the French, proposing a general peace. The French traders opposed the peace treaty, fearing that once peace was established the Iroquois would persuade the Huron to start trading with the Dutch who had established a trading post at present-day Albany, New York. When the French government established peace with the Iroquois the following year, the French traders sent additional traders out to spend the winter with the Huron and make sure they continued trading with the French rather than the Dutch. The general peace negotiated between the Iroquois and the French was broken in by the Montagnais, who were French trading partners. The Montagnais attacked the Iroquois and obtained several prisoners. The French persuaded the Montagnais to release the prisoners and sent a party to seek pardon from the Iroquois for breaking the peace. The peace party, however, was captured, tortured, and killed. For the next century, the French dealt with peace agreements which were often shattered by their trading partners. The ensuing war, battles, and skirmishes interfered with trading relations. Canoe sizes became standardized: The Montreal canoe, which was most frequently used on the routes from Montreal to the western end of Lake Superior and on the route to Michilimacinac and down the Mississippi, could carry 8, pounds of cargo plus the paddlers. Overall, the French managed to integrate two very different economic philosophies. European economics was focused on material goods and was guided by a philosophy that emphasized the individual accumulation of goods. French society was stratified, that is, it was divided into social classes. On the other hand, Indian societies were egalitarian. Philosophically, the Indians frowned on the accumulation of individual wealth. Those who acquired wealth, gave it away, and in this way gained social prestige. Some of the metal items, such as axes, knives, arrow heads, pots and pans, and awls, were incorporated into Indian cultures as substitutes for similar non-metal goods. While iron arrowheads were popular, guns and ammunition allowed the tribes to expand militarily. Guns, along with the gunpowder and the lead balls that they required, were in great demand among the Indians and were often a prestige item within the Indian nations. Most of the Indian nations with which the French had trading alliances were agricultural. In these cultures, such as that of the Huron, the women did the farming while the men hunted. As their hunting ranges increased, this brought them into more conflicts with other tribes. The French fur trade ended in when control

of Canada was transferred to the British. Overall, the French fur trade established the basic patterns for the fur trade in Canada and much of the United States.

**Chapter 9 : Fur traders - Fur trading in early North America**

*One of the earliest and most important industries in North America, the American fur trade played a major role in the development of the United States and Canada for more than years. Involving half a dozen European nations and numerous American Indian tribes, the fur trade began in the 's.*

The main trading market destination was the German city of Leipzig. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Russians began to settle in Siberia, a region rich in many mammal fur species, such as Arctic fox, lynx, sable, sea otter and stoat ermine. In a search for the prized sea otter pelts, first used in China, and later for the northern fur seal, the Russian Empire expanded into North America, notably Alaska. The fur trade played a vital role in the development of Siberia, the Russian Far East and the Russian colonization of the Americas. As recognition of the importance of the trade to the Siberian economy, the sable is a regional symbol of the Ural Sverdlovsk Oblast and the Siberian Novosibirsk, Tyumen and Irkutsk Oblasts of Russia. Fur was relied on to make warm clothing, a critical consideration prior to the organization of coal distribution for heating. Portugal and Spain played major roles in fur trading after the 15th century with their business in fur hats. Siberian fur trade From as early as the 10th century, merchants and boyars of Novgorod had exploited the fur resources "beyond the portage", a watershed at the White Lake that represents the door to the entire northwestern part of Eurasia. They began by establishing trading posts along the Volga and Vychegda river networks and requiring the Komi people to give them furs as tribute. Novgorod, the chief fur-trade center prospered as the easternmost trading post of the Hanseatic League. Novgorodians expanded farther east and north, coming into contact with the Pechora people of the Pechora River valley and the Yugra people residing near the Urals. Both of these native tribes offered more resistance than the Komi, killing many Russian tribute-collectors throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries. During the 15th century Moscow began subjugating many native tribes. One strategy involved exploiting antagonisms between tribes, notably the Komi and Yugra, by recruiting men of one tribe to fight in an army against the other tribe. Campaigns against native tribes in Siberia remained insignificant until they began on a much larger scale in and In Ivan IV, the Tsar of All the Russias, took a significant step towards securing Russian hegemony in Siberia when he sent a large army to attack the Kazan Tartars and ended up obtaining the territory from the Volga to the Ural Mountains. At this point the phrase "ruler of Obdor, Konda, and all Siberian lands" became part of the title of the Tsar in Moscow. The Stroganov family soon came into conflict with the Khan of Sibir whose land they encroached on. Ivan told the Stroganovs to hire Cossack mercenaries to protect the new settlement from the Tatars. From ca the band of Cossacks led by Yermak Timofeyevich fought many battles that eventually culminated in a Tartar victory and the temporary end to Russian occupation in the area. Similar skirmishes with Tartars took place across Siberia as Russian expansion continued. By Russia dominated the land from the Urals eastward to the Yenisey valley and to the Altai Mountains in the south, comprising about 1. Keeping up with the advances of Western Europe required significant capital and Russia did not have sources of gold and silver, but it did have furs, which became known as "soft gold" and provided Russia with hard currency. Fur trading allowed Russia to purchase from Europe goods that it lacked, like lead, tin, precious metals, textiles, firearms, and sulphur. Russia also traded furs with Ottoman Turkey and other countries in the Middle East in exchange for silk, textiles, spices, and dried fruit. The high prices that sable, black fox, and marten furs could generate in international markets spurred a "fur fever" in which many Russians moved to Siberia as independent trappers. From to, tens of thousands of sable and other valuable pelts were obtained in Siberia each year. Yasak was usually a fixed number of sable pelts which every male tribe member who was at least fifteen years old had to supply to Russian officials. At first, Russians were content to trade with the natives, exchanging goods like pots, axes, and beads for the prized sables that the natives did not value, but greater demand for furs led to violence and force becoming the primary means of obtaining the furs. The largest problem with the yasak system was that Russian governors were prone to corruption because they received no salary. They resorted to illegal means of getting furs for themselves, including bribing customs officials to allow them to personally collect yasak, extorting natives by exacting yasak multiple times over, or requiring

tribute from independent trappers. The first was an independent band of blood relatives or unrelated people who contributed an equal share of the hunting-expedition expenses; the second was a band of hired hunters who participated in expeditions fully funded by the trading companies which employed them. Members of an independent *vataga* cooperated and shared all necessary work associated with fur trapping, including making and setting traps, building forts and camps, stockpiling firewood and grain, and fishing. All fur pelts went into a common pool that the band divided equally among themselves after Russian officials exacted the tithing tax. On the other hand, a trading company provided hired fur-trappers with the money needed for transportation, food, and supplies, and once the hunt was finished, the employer received two-thirds of the pelts and the remaining ones were sold and the proceeds divided evenly among the hired laborers. During the summer, *promyshlenniki* would set up a summer camp to stockpile grain and fish, and many engaged in agricultural work for extra money. During late summer or early fall the *vatagi* left their hunting grounds, surveyed the area, and set up a winter camp. Each member of the group set at least 10 traps and the *vatagi* divided into smaller groups of 2 to 3 men who cooperated to maintain certain traps. *Promyshlenniki* checked traps daily, resetting them or replacing bait whenever necessary. The *promyshlenniki* employed both passive and active hunting-strategies. The passive approach involved setting traps, while the active approach involved the use of hunting-dogs and of bows-and-arrows. Occasionally, hunters also followed sable tracks to their burrows, around which they placed nets, and waited for the sable to emerge. Hunting expeditions lasted two to three years on average but occasionally longer. Because of the long hunting season and the fact that passage back to Russia was difficult and costly, beginning around the 1690's many *promyshlenniki* chose to stay and settle in Siberia.

**North American fur trade Fur-hat industry** The North American fur trade began as early as the 16th century with Europeans and First Nations [17] and was a central part of the early history of contact between Europeans and the native peoples of what is now the United States and Canada. In the 16th century there were European fishing vessels at Newfoundland. The first pelts in demand were beaver and sea otter, as well as occasionally deer, bear, ermine and skunk. The pelts were called *castor gras* in French and "coat beaver" in English, and were soon recognized by the newly developed felt-hat making industry as particularly useful for felting. Some historians, seeking to explain the term *castor gras*, have assumed that coat beaver was rich in human oils from having been worn so long much of the top-hair was worn away through usage, exposing the valuable under-wool, and that this is what made it attractive to the hatters. This seems unlikely, since grease interferes with the felting of wool, rather than enhancing it. Hat makers began to use it in England soon after, particularly after Huguenot refugees brought their skills and tastes with them from France. In 1608 he acquired a monopoly from Henry IV and tried to establish a colony near the mouth of the Saguenay River at Tadoussac. Mammal winter pelts were prized for warmth, particularly animal pelts for beaver wool felt hats, which were an expensive status symbol in Europe. The demand for beaver wool felt hats was such that the beaver in Europe and European Russia had largely disappeared through exploitation. In 1600 Dallas Carite and Adriaen Block headed expeditions to establish fur trade relationships with the Mohawk and Mohican. By the 1610s the Dutch were sending vessels to secure large economic returns from fur trading. England was slower to enter the American fur trade than France and the Dutch Republic, but as soon as English colonies were established, development companies learned that furs provided the best way for the colonists to remit value back to the mother country. Furs were being dispatched from Virginia soon after 1607, and the Plymouth Colony was sending substantial amounts of beaver to its London agents through the 1620s and 1630s. Other English merchants also traded for furs around the Saint Lawrence River region in the 1620s, but these were officially discouraged. Such efforts ceased as France strengthened its presence in Canada. Meanwhile, the New England fur trade expanded, not only inland, but northward along the coast into the Bay of Fundy region. Fur traders in Canada, trading with Native Americans, In the 1670s the English fur trade entered a new phase. Their trading voyage had convinced them that the best fur country was far to the north and west, and could best be reached by ships sailing into Hudson Bay. Their treatment in Canada suggested that they would not find support from France for their scheme. The pair went to New England, where they found local financial support for at least two attempts to reach Hudson Bay, both unsuccessful. Their ideas had reached the ears of English authorities, however, and in 1671 Radisson and Groseilliers were persuaded to go to London. After some setbacks, a number of English investors were found to back another attempt for Hudson

Bay. Two ships were sent out in One, with Radisson aboard, had to turn back, but the other, the Nonsuch , with Groseilliers, did penetrate the bay. There she was able to trade with the indigenes, collecting a fine cargo of beaver skins before the expedition returned to London in October The delighted investors sought a royal charter, which they obtained the next year. They brought back furs mainly beaver and sold them, sometimes by private treaty but usually by public auction. The beaver was bought mainly for the English hat-making trade, while the fine furs went to the Netherlands and Germany. Meanwhile, in the English southern colonies , a deerskin trade was established around , based at the export hub of Charleston, South Carolina. Word spread among Native hunters that the Europeans would exchange pelts for the European-manufactured goods that were highly desired in native communities. Colonial trading posts in the southern colonies also introduced many types of alcohol especially brandy and rum for trade. The same pelt could fetch enough to buy dozens of axe heads in England, making the fur trade extremely profitable for the Europeans. The Natives used the iron axe heads to replace stone axe heads which they had made by hand in a labor-intensive process, so they derived substantial benefits from the trade as well. The British began to see the ill effects of alcohol on Natives, and the chiefs objected to its sale and trade. Socioeconomic ties This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. Trade was a way to forge alliances and maintain good relations between different cultures. The fur traders were men with capital and social standing. Often younger men were single when they went to North America to enter the fur trade; they made marriages or cohabited with high-ranking Indian women of similar status in their own cultures. Fur trappers and other workers usually had relationships with lower-ranking women. In some cases both Native American and European-American cultures excluded the mixed-race descendants. If the Native Americans were a tribe with a patrilineal kinship system, they considered children born to a white father to be white, in a type of hypodescent classification, although the Native mother and tribe might care for them. The Europeans tended to classify children of Native women as Native, regardless of the father, similar to the hypodescent of their classification of the children of slaves. The interracial relationships resulted in a two-tier mixed-race class, in which descendants of fur traders and chiefs achieved prominence in some Canadian social, political, and economic circles. Because of the wealth at stake, different European-American governments competed with various native societies for control of the fur trade. Native Americans sometimes based decisions of which side to support in times of war in relation to which people had provided them with the best trade goods in an honest manner. Because trade was so politically important, the Europeans tried to regulate it in hopes often futile of preventing abuse. Unscrupulous traders sometimes cheated natives by plying them with alcohol during the transaction, which subsequently aroused resentment and often resulted in violence. In John Jacob Astor , who had created the huge monopoly of the American Fur Company , withdrew from the fur trade. He could see the decline in fur animals and realized the market was changing, as beaver hats went out of style. Expanding European settlement displaced native communities from the best hunting grounds. European demand for furs subsided as fashion trends shifted. To continue obtaining European goods on which they had become dependent and to pay off their debts, they often resorted to selling land to the European settlers.