

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for booking our “Le Voyageur” program at FortWhyte Alive. This program is a unique opportunity to take your students on a trip to the past, the year is 1800 and they are about to embark by Voyageur canoe to trade their goods for furs. Learn about the day in the life of a North West Company voyageur, and the integral role of First Nations and Métis contributions and relationships in the fur trade.

Appropriate Dress for Your Field Trip

To ensure that students get the most out of their FortWhyte experience, we ask that they be appropriately dressed for a 2-hour outdoor excursion. All of our programs include time outdoors, regardless of weather. Comfort and safety are key in making this an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Suggestions for Outdoor Dress

Layering of clothing is very helpful in staying comfortable, as they can always be removed or added as needed. Waterproof outer layers are also important. Rain may get us wet but so will dew on grass, melting snow on pants and puddles in the spring. Sturdy footwear is important to protect feet while walking the trails.

Remember your sun protection - a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses are important for comfort and safety. In certain seasons, biting insects and ticks are found at FortWhyte Alive, so insect repellent should be considered.

Please share this information with other teachers that are coming to FortWhyte Alive with your group.

GOAL

To gain an understanding of a ‘day in the life’ of a NWC Voyageur, and learn the essential role of First Nations and Métis communities in the Fur Trade.

OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

1. Name the two main reasons Voyageurs had for traveling to the interior.
2. Describe how the Voyageurs lived and what they did during the summer season.
3. Discuss how the First Nations were essential partners in the Fur Trade, and how the NWC Voyageurs interacted with communities in the interior.
4. Describe some impacts on Indigenous peoples and the environment that occurred during the Fur Trade.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FortWhyte Alive is located on Treaty 1 Territory, on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota peoples, as well as the Birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Homeland.

FortWhyte Alive is guided by respect for the land, for all living things, and for all people and our future generations. We recognize the truth of harms done to Indigenous peoples throughout Canada's history of colonization and are committed to reconciliation and the building of a better future for all our relations. All are welcome here.


VOCABULARY

Term	Definition
Anishinaabe and Anishinaabeg	Group of culturally and linguistically related First Nations people. Anishinaabe signifies a single person, while Anishinaabeg is for a group of people (ex. "The Anishinaabeg people in what is now called Canada"). Ojibwe is one cultural group within the Anishinaabeg people.
Avant	The bow paddler in the canoe who sets the pace for the rest of the paddlers.
Brigade	A group of voyageurs.
Ceinture Fléchée	A very long woven sash used and worn by Voyageurs. It would be wound around the waist many times to provide support and prevent hernias and had many other functions. The sash today is an important Métis cultural symbol which carries tradition and meaning in its design and colours.
Canot du nord	"Northern canoe" - a smaller version of the Montrealer canoes that would be used to transport across the Great Lakes. The canoe du nord could still carry over a ton of trade goods/furs and hold a crew of about 8 voyageurs.
Commis	Head of trading (acting proprietor) of a fort.
Gouvernail	The steering paddler at the back of the canoe (stern) who gives instructions to the paddlers.
Made Beaver	A beaver pelt with guard hairs removed, ready for felting. Currency of the fur trade era.
Métis	A person of mixed indigenous and Euro-Canadian ancestry, in particular a community which formed in the 19th century as the Métis Nation in the areas around the Red and Saskatchewan Rivers.

Pemmican	A mixture of dried bison meat, berries, and fat which was a main food source for fur traders.
Rame	“The paddle used in many voyageurs’ canoes. Some songs, such as Chanson à la rame, included the use of the word to establish a paddling rhythm.
Tumpline	A strap attached at both ends to a sack that is used to carry an object by using the strap over the forehead. This method uses the spine, rather than the shoulders, to carry heavy objects. Many Voyageurs used their ceinture fléchées as a make-shift tumpline.
Voyageur	French term that means “traveler”. This name was originally given to all those involved in the fur trade, but was later used more specifically to describe the French-speaking fur traders who transported furs by canoe.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

All of the books listed below relate to the theme of the fur trade, are recommended for young adults, and are available through the Winnipeg Public Libraries and/or the [Online Resources for Manitoba Educators](#) catalog. You may wish to make these titles available in your classroom surrounding your 'Le Voyageur' field trip.

Books and activities with an Indigenous perspective are indicated with a medicine wheel. 

Historical Fiction and Cultural Story
The Giving Tree, a retelling of a Metis Traditional Story by Leah Dorian 
The Broken Blade and Wintering by William Durbin
Bright Paddles by Mary Alice Downie
The Red Sash by Jean Pendziwol 
Trouble at Fort LaPointe by Kathleen Ernst
The Voyageur's Paddle by Kathy-Jo Wargin
Belle of Batoche by Jacqueline Guest 
Non-Fiction
Peter Fidler and the Métis by Donna Lee Dumont 
Radisson and des Groselliers: Fur Traders of the North by Katharine Bailey
Adventurers: Hudson's Bay Company, The Epic Story by Christopher Moore
The Fur Trade in Canada by Michael Payne
Hudson's Bay Company and Northwest Company by Jennifer Nault
The Voyageurs, Forefathers of the Métis Nation by Zoey Roy and Norman Fleury 
Canadian Aboriginal Art & Culture: Métis by Jennifer Howse 
Indigenous Communities in Canada - Métis Community by Laura K. Murray 
Online Resources
<u>Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre</u> : Resource Search, Life During the Fur Trade Era

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Could You Have Been a Voyageur?

Activity Length: 1 lesson

Curriculum Links: Social Studies

Voyageur life can sound ideal, but in reality it was incredibly hard work and very dangerous at times. Some voyageurs joined brigades in their early to mid teens. During their first voyages they may have been the same age or just a little older than your students.

So would your students have made the cut? Would they have even wanted to sign a voyageur contract? Before your trip to FortWhyte, discuss who the voyageurs were, what their lives were like, and how they were paid for their service to trading companies.

Review the mock "Voyageur Contract" in **Attachment #1** which students will be introduced to at FortWhyte. Many Voyageurs could not read or write, so they would have the contract read to them, and marked an X to sign.

When voyageurs were contracted by the North West Company they were offered a lump sum wage. At first glance this wage appeared to be quite generous at double what they could have earned working in New France, but in reality it was not. Voyageurs had to pay several overhead costs out of their wages including food, goods for trading, and a percentage fee to their brigade leader. Sometimes after their first year of work voyageurs were actually in debt and owed money to the North West Company. In this circumstance a voyageur would have to continue working for the North West Company until their debt was paid off.

The links below provide information about the daily life of a voyageur and a template for comparing/contrasting it to the daily lives of your students.

Festival du Voyageur: Kid's Zone - What's Your Voyageur Name?

<https://heho.ca/en/resources/>

A Typical Voyageur versus You:

<http://www.hbcheritage.ca/teacher-resources/TG-HBC-Voyageur-ENG.pdf>

A Day in the Life of a Voyageur:

http://web.archive.org/web/20040218212630/http://www.lafete.org/new/v_ger/voyE.htm

A Great Rivalry

Activity Length: 1-2 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Language Arts

There were two major trading companies in Canada throughout much of the fur trade era: the North West Company (NWC) and the Hudson Bay Company (HBC). There was a great rivalry between these two companies and their voyageurs were in competition with each other.

- Why were there two companies in the first place and why did they eventually merge?
- Why were NWC and HBC forts built so close to each other all across North America?

- What were the differences between the two companies?
- Based on the locations where each company operated from, which company do you think employed primarily French voyageurs and which was primarily English voyageurs? Why?

To begin exploring these questions visit

<https://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/acquisitions/the-north-west-company>

<https://fwhp.ca/about-us/our-history/fort-william-circa-1815/134-north-west-company-history>

Have students mark out fur trade routes on a large map of Canada and consider whether it would have been more advantageous to access the north and west of the country from Hudson Bay or from the St. Lawrence River.

Have students write a short declaration stating which company they would join and for what reasons.

The Voyageur Canoe

Activity Length: 1 lesson

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Mathematics

During the program, students will have the opportunity to paddle a replica Voyageur canoe.

FortWhyte's Voyageur canoes are loosely modeled after the fur trade era Northern Canoes (*canot du nord*), which were used to travel through western and northern Canada to remote trading outposts or communities. FortWhyte's canoes can seat 15 paddlers plus a steersman.

Though an authentic *canot du nord* would have been a similar size, they would have been paddled by fewer voyageurs and loaded with over one ton of cargo (trade goods on the outbound journey and fur bales on the return journey).

Larger Montreal canoes (or *canot du maître*) were used for transportation across the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence River. York boats were also used by the Hudson Bay Company in the final century of the fur trade.

How would an authentic voyageur canoe have been constructed and loaded?

Activity:

- Measure out the size of the Voyageur canoes in your classroom, marking with tape on the floor or wall to gain perspective on size.
- Use hand weights or items of known weight (eg a 10lb bag of flour) to help students understand the weight of some of the goods, such as 90lb (40kg) packs of trade goods.
- Have students research different trade goods and items that the canoe would hold (from the interactive poster) and share the information with the class. What items were needed for the journey? What items were traded?
- Have students discuss what sorts of social and physical skills would have been required for successful cross-country paddling. You may also wish to discuss the quick and consistent pace required for voyageur paddling - and connect to the songs the voyageurs used to maintain a synchronized rhythm.

Resources:

- <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/content/canoe/dash/full> for an interactive online poster of a loaded Voyageur canoe
- Teaching resource for the canoe:
<http://www.hbcheritage.ca/teacher-resources/TG-HBC-Canoe-ENG.pdf>
→Modification for Gr. 4: instead of asking students to estimate the weight of the items in the

canoe, pre-assign a weight to each item so that students can focus on the categorizing and calculating part of the activity.

- Discover the dimensions of the canoes at <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/history/transportation/canoe/home>
- Other HBC Heritage teacher resources: <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/learning/teacher-resources>
- Voyageur Songs: <https://heho.ca/en/voyageur-songs/>

Trading for Profit

Activity Length: 1-2 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Mathematics

In the program, students will have the opportunity to play the role of voyageurs trading goods for furs. In order to trade successfully, students will need to understand what the rules of trading are and how to negotiate a fair profit.

Activity:

- Discuss how money was not used during the fur trade. Instead, beaver was the common currency (just like our dollar today). Trade goods as well as furs of all kinds had a value in “made beaver,” which is one beaver pelt in prime condition with guard hairs removed. “Made beaver tokens” were made, but most trading was simply exchanging goods for furs. See <https://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/fur-trade/currency> for details.
- **Attachment #2** contains copies of the Fur and Trade Good Value Charts the students will be expected to understand to make a trade. Review these with your students.
- Voyageurs needed to make profit on the goods that they traded, in order to be able to pay costs to the company and have enough leftover to support their families. A good trade was generally one which **doubled the amount** they had spent purchasing an item. For instance, a voyageur might hope to get **10 made beaver** for a blanket they had purchased for the value of **5 made beaver**.
 - If students have difficulties following this concept, consider creating tangible items for students to interact with: for example, give students tokens to signify amounts of made beaver and cards to signify various trade items.
- Have students solve math problems based on the values in **Attachment #2**. For instance, if a voyageur wanted to trade four shirts for furs, what are two combinations of animal furs they could ask for? How much profit could they make, in Made Beaver, compared with the shirts’ purchase value?

Resource:

Fur Trade Educational Package from Kayak magazine:

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/kayak-in-the-classroom/fur-trade-history/fur-trade-educational-package>

IMPORTANT NOTE:

A relationship of respect with First Nations fur suppliers was essential. Asking an unreasonably high price for an item could jeopardize the Company’s ability to continue to trade. Historically, voyageurs were considered too inexperienced and the negotiating would be by only the brigade leader.

Discuss how respectful relationships could be built by voyageurs with First Nations. Partaking in cultural practices, such as the exchanging of gifts like tobacco and/or learning the language of those you traded with was essential. Offering respect to certain people would greatly impact the outcome of a business deal. Métis voyageurs were often able to communicate in multiple languages, such as Ojibway, Cree, French, English, and Michif. Utilize the Literature Connections section to increase

students' awareness of Métis culture.

What Did They Trade?

Activity Length: 1 lesson

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Science

Many trade goods and animal furs that are provided on FortWhyte's list will be unfamiliar to your students. Do some investigation ahead of time to help students understand their value.

Classroom Activity:

- Divide students into working groups.
- Choose various furs and goods with different values in Made Beaver (see **Attachment #2**). The most valuable furs were rare, difficult to trap, or in high demand in Europe - the beaver remained in constant demand for felt hats. Certain European goods had higher value to First Nations communities.
- Have students research 2 different furs and 2 trade items and their use during the fur trade era, and create drawings and descriptions in a sales brochure format.
- Students can include images, description of the item's materials, quality, uses, etc.
- Share back with the group.

Indigenous Contributions

Activity Length: 1-5 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies

Trading and relationships with other communities had always been a way of life for First Nations. Without First Nations, and later Métis knowledge of trade and their trade networks, the fur trade would not have been possible. The fur trade was dependent on the men and women of the First Nations and Métis Nation.

1. Learn about the contributions of Indigenous technology - many of these items are part of our lives to this day.

Have students create a guide to the history and use of one Indigenous technology researched - some good examples would be snowshoes, canoes, toboggans and Red River Carts. See **Attachment #3** for a Snowshoe Design resource.

Indigenous Technology:

- <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1302807151028/1534952294430>
 - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/foundation_gr2/blms/2-2-1c.pdf
 - <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/mm-red-river-cart>
2. The Manitoba Museum, Lower Fort Garry and Festival du Voyageur all offer in-depth resources to learn more about the Fur Trade and Indigenous Peoples. Find a program or activity that suits your class.
 - Manitoba Museum: <https://manitobamuseum.ca/education/school-programs/>
 - Lower Fort Garry: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/mb/fortgarry/activ/edu>
 - Festival du Voyageur: <https://heho.ca/en/>
 3. Learn about the history of Treaties and their importance to this day. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 marked the Crown's first official document acknowledging First Nations groups.

Many more would follow over the coming centuries, including the Numbered Treaties. Winnipeg is in Treaty 1 territory, Treaty 1 was signed at Lower Fort Garry in August 1871.

- The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba is an extensive source for Treaty education resources. <http://www.trcm.ca/>

POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

Voyageur Games and Culture

Activity Length: 1 lesson

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Physical Education

Voyageurs did not have a lot of down time during their travels, but if they made camp early, were delayed by poor weather, or were wintering at a fort or outpost it was up to them to create their own entertainment. They were well known for their energetic songs, dances, and games. Voyageur games, in particular, were highly competitive and were designed to showcase individuals' strength and skills, such as aim.

Among the most popular voyageur games were hatchet throwing, wrestling, racing, and strength competitions. Best played outdoors, these games are appropriate for summer or winter.

Try these Voyageur Games in the schoolyard:

- Arm Wrestling: Have the students pair up and lie facing each other and arm wrestle.
- Leg Wrestling: Two students lie down on their back beside each other facing in opposite directions, hip-to-hip. They count to three, lifting their inside leg for each count. On three, they lock legs and try to flip their opponent over.
- Tappe la Galette: Partners stand face to face. They each position their own feet toe to heel, and then touch their front toe to their partners front toe. Each partner holds out one hand like they are going to shake. One person must then try to tap the others' hand to cause them to lose their balance and step out, while the other person tries to move their hand out of the way. This game was played to improve balancing skills needed in the canoe.
- Relay Sled Races: You will need two large toboggans with strings and pylons to turn around. Divide the group into two teams. On each team, break into groups of 3 students. A group will have one student sit in the sled, while two pull. Students must pull their team member around the pylon and back to the start line, before passing off the sled to the next group of three. This is a wild ride!
- Target Practice: Have your class divide up into teams, lay out targets (hula hoops) and have each member of each group throw 3 bean bags, plastic darts, or other weighted items. Have each person keep track of how many they get in. After each group member has thrown, add up the number of darts that went in. The team with the most darts wins.

More Voyageur fun ideas?

Festival du Voyageur activities: <https://heho.ca/en/school-program/>

The Voyageur Legacy

Activity Length: 1-3 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies

How is the legacy of the fur trade still evident in our city and province today?

Activity:

- Have students research a Manitoba fur trade landmark using an Internet search and library resources.
- Consider the following as locations of interest:
 - Upper and Lower Fort Garry
 - Fort Gibraltar (Festival du Voyageur)
 - Fort La Reine (Portage la Prairie)
 - Fort Ellice (St. Lazare)
 - Pine Fort/ Fort des Pinettes (Spruce Woods)
 - The Forks
 - Streets in Winnipeg: Portage, Main, Pembina, St. Mary's, St. Anne's (all historic Red River Cart routes)
- Have students create a Then and Now in drawing and text that describes that site as it was during the fur trade, and what it looks like today.

Resources

- The Canadian Encyclopedia: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/>
- Map of Historic Sites of Manitoba: <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/>
- Street Names: Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg: <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/index.shtml>

Birth of a Nation

Activity Length: 1-3 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies

As European voyageurs worked in new territories, some chose to stay in First Nations communities and started families. The children of mixed ancestry grew up, and became the ancestors of Métis people living today.

The Métis Nation in Manitoba has its origins in the history of the fur trade. Métis culture connects with European and First Nations culture, as well as having a unique culture of its own.

Investigation:

What contributions did the Métis make to the fur trade and how has Métis culture continued to thrive and evolve in Manitoba?

Students can research and learn about Métis culture and create a report on a particular Métis symbol, cultural activity, or person in a variety of formats.

1. Explore Métis culture and history with your students. The Literature Connections in this document provide good suggestions. The Manitoba Metis Federation website has many resources and more can be found below:
 - History of the Métis: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis_origins.html
 - Language and Culture: http://www.mmf.mb.ca/michif_language.php
 - Images of Culture, Clothing, Art: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis5.html
 - The Métis sash: <https://mmfmetis youth.com/explore/the-metis-sache/>
 - Sash craft: <http://ripple.paddle.mb.ca/ceinture-flechee-2/>
 - Métis symbols: <http://www.metisnation.org/culture--heritage/symbols-and-traditions>
 - Bring Métis culture to life in your school with a jigging performance or workshop.
 - Asham Stompers: https://www.lrcc.mb.ca/business_directory_view.php?company_id=445

- Winnipeg's Aboriginal School of Dance:
<https://aboriginalschoolofdance.com/contact-us/>

2. Métis buffalo hunts resulted in their provision of a major resource for fur traders and their community - the dried protein, fat and berry product known as pemmican. Many Indigenous peoples produced this food, particularly Cree peoples, whose language the name pimīhkān, meaning fat/grease originates from.
 - Try making a vegetarian version of pemmican! Because this recipe contains no meat, everyone can try it, and food safety concerns about raw, dried meat are not an issue. Allergens may still be a consideration.
 - You will need:
 - 1 cup Textured Vegetable Protein (dry, available in health food or bulk stores)
 - Half a handful of dried fruit (Saskatoons, blueberries, cherries, etc. are most historically appropriate).
 - 1 teaspoon vegetable bouillon powder
 - ½ teaspoon vegetable oil
 - Add enough water to make the mixture "stick" together – then dry into small cakes on a cookie sheet in a slow oven. This mixture will keep two weeks at least, possibly longer, and is far less fatty than "real" pemmican – but is a good, lightweight, multi-food-group snack, in the spirit of traditional pemmican.

The Fur Trade Today

Activity Length: 1-3 lessons

Curriculum Links: Social Studies/Language Arts

Is the fur trade in Canada a thing of the past or does it still exist today?

Have students research what furs are worth today and which are most in demand.

What regulations are in place to ensure that furs are harvested sustainably and why is there sometimes controversy over animals being hunted or trapped for their pelts?

Have your students look into the modern day fur trade from multiple perspectives and respectfully debate its pros and cons.

Remember to consider Indigenous perspectives and the importance of traditional hunting and trapping that existed in Canada long before Europeans became invested in North American furs.

- Visit the Fur Council's website for educational resources:
<https://www.furcouncil.com/resources-for-schools/>

Voyageur Contract

The undersigned have committed themselves to three years with the North West Company, traveling from the interior to Fort William every year transporting furs from the west and returning to the west with goods to be traded with local First Nations.

This agreement, thus made, for and paying the sum of 500 pounds per year. Made and sealed at Fort Whyte in observance of:

Brigade Leader, _____.

On this day, _____, 1800.














































_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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Attachment #2

Trade Items	Purchase Value in Made Beavers	Value in Made Beavers for Trade Profit
Small Axe	1	2
Metal File	1	2
Ice Chisel	1	2
Brass Kettle	2	4
Shirt	2	4
Gunpowder (2 pounds)	2	4
Gloves (1 pair)	2	4
Sugar (4 pounds)	3	6
Thread (1 pound)	3	6
Knives (4 of them)	3	6
Socks (1 pair)	3	6
Cloth Fabric (2 yards)	3	6
Powder Horn	3	6
Blanket	5	10
Capot	6	12
Musket	10	20

Fur Values Chart

Animal Fur	Value in Made Beavers
Silver Fox	4
Black Bear	2
Lynx	1
Beaver	1
2 Wolf	1
2 Badger	1
2 Fisher	1
3 Marten	1
3 Mink	1
4 Coyote	1
10 Muskrat	1

Animal	Value in Made Beavers
Silver Fox	 
Black Bear	 
Lynx	 
Beaver	 
Wolf	  
Badger	  
Fisher	  
Marten	   
Mink	   
Coyote	    
Muskrat	      (10)
Rabbit	         (12)

Attachment #3

Snowshoe Designs

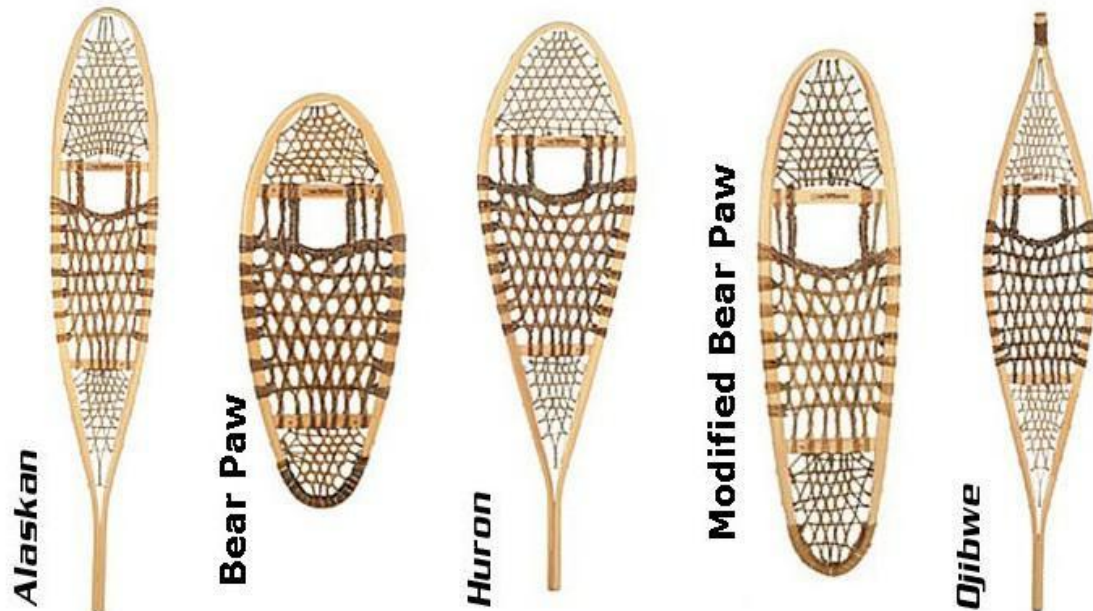


Image from: <http://rhddistributing.com/snow-shoes/>

A) Bearpaw (a.k.a. Otter, Green Mountain, Ski-doo, Squirrel)

Flat, short and wide with no tail, this snowshoe is ideal for dense forest, since there is no tail to catch on trees. The large round form supports weight on the snow. The flat toe provides a strong, stable toehold for going up and down hilly terrain. In the mountains, *bearpaws* are preferred since you can push the toes into the snow to make your own "stairs".

B) Beavertail (a.k.a. Huron, Michigan, Algonquin, Maine)

This style was designed for wet snow conditions found in the east. It is flat except for a slight upwardly curved toe; it has a distinctive tail. The toe is curved up to allow easier walking, without catching your toe in the snow. Its width provides stability and facilitates hill climbing. The heavy tail acts as a rudder and keeps the snowshoe in a straight line with each step. It also acts as a counterweight at the back of the snowshoe aiding the foot to pivot in the toe hole.

C) Ojibwe (a.k.a. Ski, Cree)

Narrower than other styles, with a toe curved noticeably upward, this snowshoe facilitates running and following dog teams across plains and other flat terrain such as open lakes. The long toe and tail make turning in dense forest difficult. Pom-poms on the snowshoes are partly decorative but they also may prevent snow blindness, by providing colour contrast with the white snow, and they also help to muffle the noisy scraping sound of cold wood.

Online Reference:

<https://www.snowshoemag.com/2004/10/18/a-look-back-an-overview-of-traditional-snowshoe-design-in-canada/>