

# Wisconsin & the Fur Trade

## Discovery Box Overview and Contents

### Overview

Europeans first arrived in America while they were searching for gold, spices and a route to Asia. They did not find any of this, but instead, found a land rich with fur-bearing mammals. Furs were highly prized in Europe. The quest for furs led explorers into new parts of North America and in contact with new people. The French were the first to arrive in Wisconsin, befriendng tribes and setting up posts. Indigenous groups were happy to trade with the French since they got tools like brass kettles and iron traps to make their daily work easier. This changed their culture and practices in many ways.

### Key Points and Topics

Correct Terminology for Indigenous Tribes  
Native communities in Great Lakes Regions and Waukesha County  
Brief overview of the Fur Trade  
Trading Posts  
Who were the voyageurs?  
Beaver pelts and fur fashion  
European trade goods  
Wisconsin Fur Traders  
The end of the fur trade

### Discovery Box Contents

		
Gray wool blanket	Blue fabric piece	White fabric piece
		
Red knitted voyageur cap	String of metal bells	Multicolored string of beads



Tin cup



Metal cooking pot



Sugar cones



Flint stones in leather pouch



Metal animal trap



Tanned leather piece - white



Tanned leather piece - brown



Mink pelts (3) on a leather strap



Otter pelt



Raccoon pelt



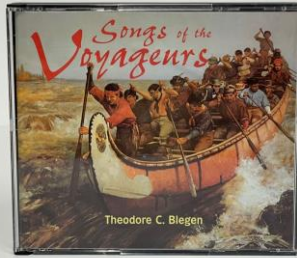
Rabbit pelt



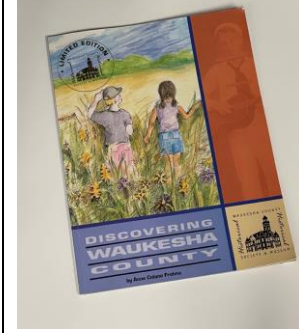
Beaver Pelt



Deer pelt



Voyageur Songs CD



Discovering Waukesha County Book (p. 9-11)

## Photos

- Frontier Trading Post, ca. 1785
- French Fur Traders at La Baye
- Images of 4 different animal pelts
- Broad Axe image from WCHSM
- Hunting Rifle from WCHSM
- Hunting Rifle image
- Powder Horn from WCHSM
- Woman wearing Ermine petticoat
- Woman wearing Fur Muff
- Men's beaver hat from WCHSM
- Jacque Vieau image
- Angeline Vieau image
- Peter Vieau and sons images
- Amable Vieau image
- John Jacob Astor image
- Friendship medal image
- Replica of Jacques Vieau's cabin
- Over-hunting pelt image
- Winnebago Drum Dance image

## Classroom Activities

- Artifact Detective
- Learn about Drum dances
- Practice Rowing along to a voyageur song
- Trading Post Activity (laminated cards)
- Fur Trade Job Descriptions