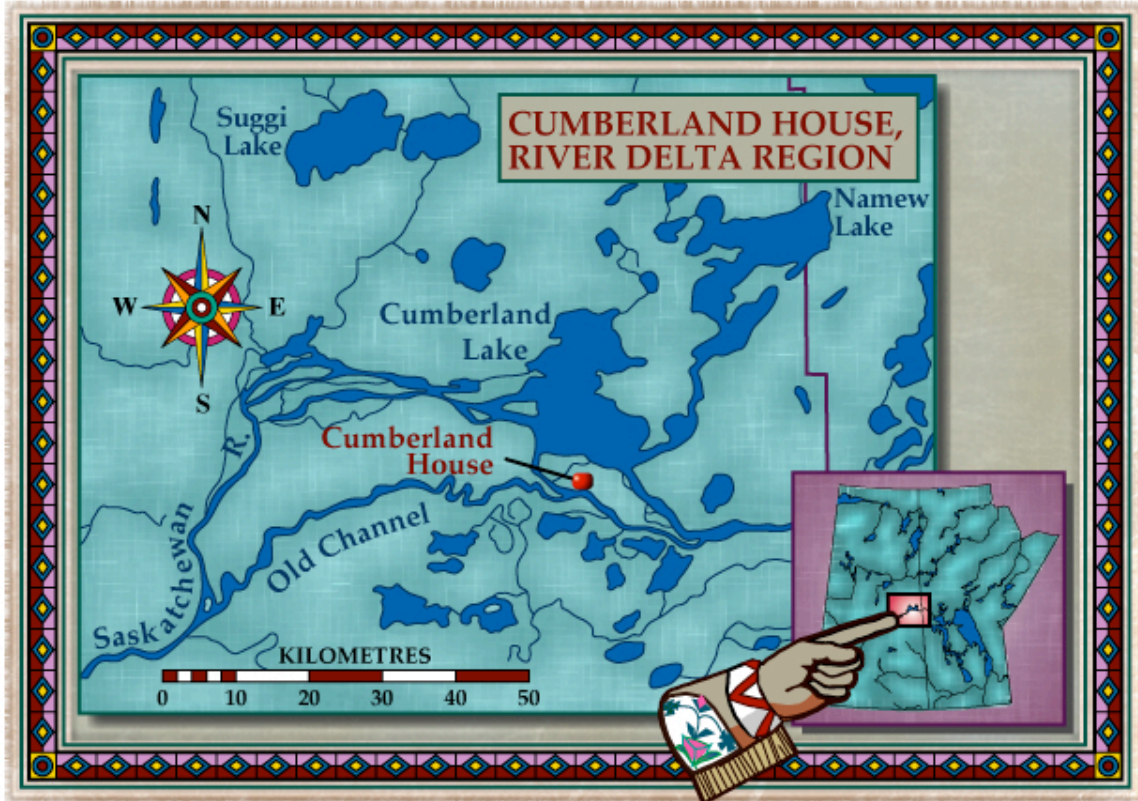


Cumberland House – Leah Dorion and Todd Paquin

Module Objective: The students will be introduced to both the history and archaeology of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan – one of the oldest continuous Métis communities in Canada.



1) Introduction to the History and Archaeology of Cumberland House.

There are three main sources of information available to us today regarding the early history of the Cumberland House *Métis*. These are:

- 1) The oral histories of the people living in the community today.
- 2) Historic documents such as fur trade journals, accounts and correspondence,
- 3) The results of archaeological investigations carried out at the early fur trade post located on Pine Island.

The advantages of having three sources of data to review are considerable to historical archaeologists. Each source of information is considered an independent source of data. In this manner, the combination of information

helps the historical archaeologist "put the pieces of the past" back together. For example, an historic document may resolve a confusing point about some type of artifact recovered during excavation procedures. Similarly, an oral history has the potential to provide a critical piece of information that neither historic documents nor excavated materials can properly identify. In turn, information obtained from the archaeological record has the potential to "fill in the blanks" left by oral histories and written records.

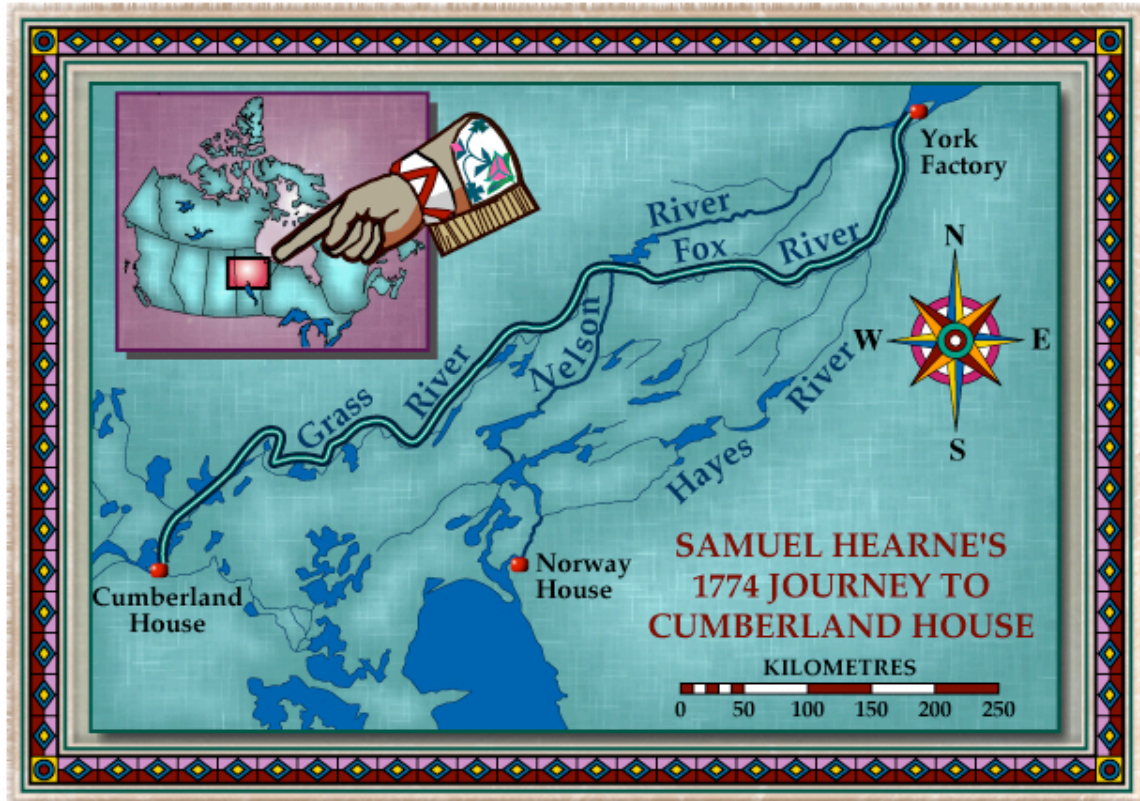
II) The History of Cumberland House

On September 4, 1774, the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) explorer Samuel Hearne and his crew arrived at *Ministikominuhikosak* (Pine Island) in the Saskatchewan River Delta. The English quickly surveyed land on the island's north shore in order to build a fort – the HBC's first inland trading post. The English christened the fort "Cumberland House", while the local Cree called it *Waskukikun*. The name "Cumberland House" was chosen by the English in honour of Prince Rupert, the Duke of Cumberland. Furthermore, HBC employees were not necessarily the first fur traders to interact with the Cree of this area during the late eighteenth century.

The fur trade post was built near a centuries old Swampy Cree **aggregating centre**. It was a strategic location to build a fur trade post since the region had a large First Nations population and was blessed with an abundance of fauna such as water fowl, moose, beaver, muskrat and fish. The fort was, more importantly, built on the confluence of two major fur trade highways: the Saskatchewan River system flowing to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and the Grass, Fox and Nelson Rivers draining into Hudson Bay. The construction of Cumberland House was meant to stave off competition from the "**Pedlars**", independent fur

traders based in Montréal, who relentlessly paddled their *canots du nord* or “North Canoes” through the Great Lakes and Lake Winnipeg to reach the Saskatchewan River Delta. The Montréal men also managed to build a trading post in the region in 1772. Hearne’s trading post served as the HBC inland headquarters from 1774 to 1821. The original fort remained in operation until 1794, when a new one was built several kilometres to the west, on the other side of the bay.

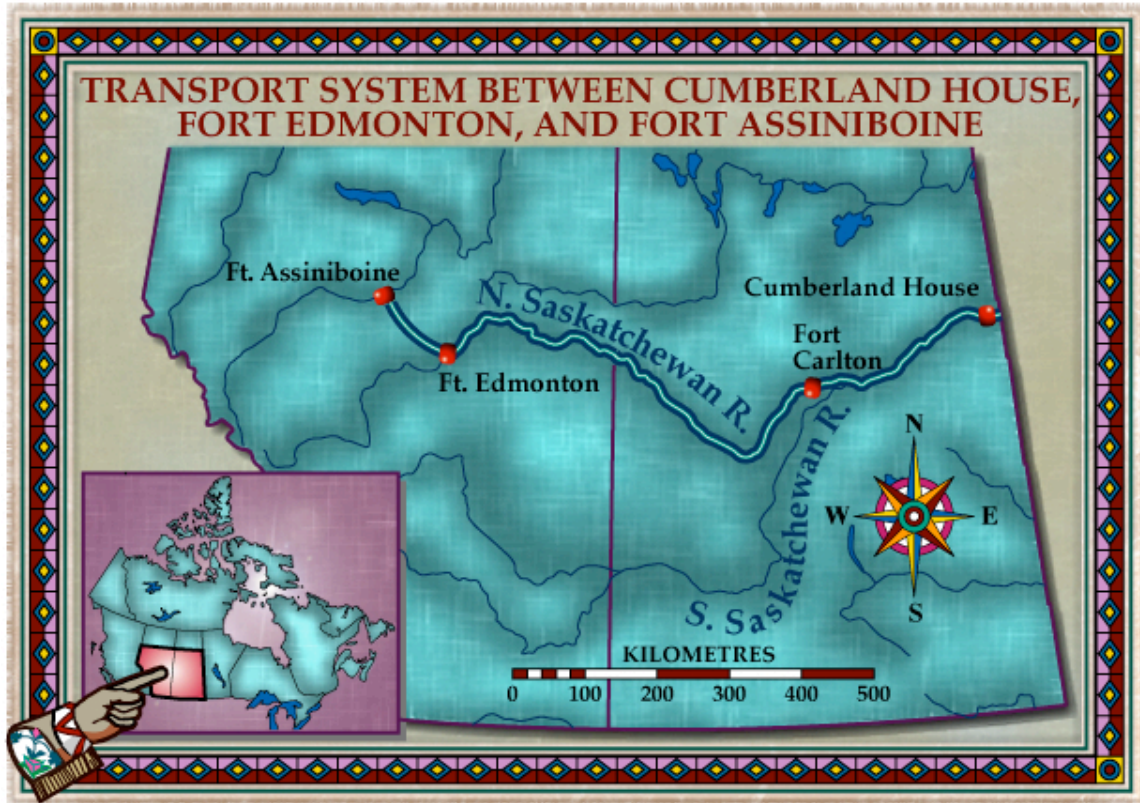
Cumberland House was, from its beginnings, a quintessential Métis community. Métissage was practiced as soon as the community was founded. In 1773, Samuel Hearne, for instance, married Mary Norton, a Métis woman. Hearne’s successor, Matthew Cocking, had three Aboriginal wives with whom he raised three Métis daughters. Thus, the foundation was laid for a new bicultural fur trade society. Aboriginal women ensured the community’s early survival during the long and harsh winter months. For example, during his first winter at Cumberland House, Samuel Hearne commented on the fact that only two or three Aboriginal women remained in the area. These women proved a godsend because they stayed to “Make, Mend, Knit Snowshoes &c for us during the winter”. In fact, it became customary for all factors at the Cumberland House post to have a Métis wife since they had kin ties to local First Nations populations and possessed many survival skills such as moccasin and snowshoe manufacture to food provisioning.



Cumberland House's Métis residents faced a great deal of adversity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Firstly, Cumberland House's preeminent position within the fur trade's inland hierarchy ended once Norway House was built in 1778. Nonetheless, the community remained an important pemmican depot and supplier of country produce for passing northern brigades. Secondly, in the early 1780s and late 1830s, a small pox epidemic decimated the local *Opaskweyaw* (Cree) population, leaving only a few weakened Métis left in the community – likely as a result of inherited immunity to the contagion from their European fathers. Thirdly, the local Métis became too reliant on muskrat trapping in the 1820s, which proved detrimental to the community when animal stocks plummeted. Fortunately, many Métis soon became York Boat freighters and packers for the HBC after the **1821 fur-trade merger**. Fourthly, throughout the nineteenth century, the region encountered several droughts, which adversely affected muskrat and moose populations in the delta. Fifthly, the

Cumberland House post was in perpetual decline after 1850 as the fur trade economy lessened in importance in British North America. Finally, after the 1885 Resistance, more southern Métis moved into the region along with non-Aboriginal trappers. As a consequence, natural resource depletion followed.





In the mid-nineteenth century, the apparatus of church and state moved into Cumberland House and replaced the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1839, for instance, the Anglican Church established the first educational mission at Cumberland for the local First Nations and Métis. The Reverend Henry Budd, the first Métis to be ordained in Western Canada, inaugurated a school at Cumberland House in 1842. In 1875, Père Ovide Charlebois founded St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Mission. A year later, many Cumberland House area Cree and Métis signed Treaty Number 5. After the 1885 Resistance, in 1887, the Dominion government sent scrip commissioners to Cumberland House in order to extinguish the local Métis' Aboriginal title to the land. As a result, many Métis were taken off the Treaty pay lists in order to receive **Scrip**. Steamer service arrived in the nineteenth century and provided local residents with a relatively inexpensive means to travel to the outside world until 1925. Many Cumberland House Métis worked on the steamers as labourers, providing coal

for the boat's engines or as pilots was the case of "Steamboat" Bill MacKenzie. Père Charlebois also oversaw the final construction of a Roman Catholic Church in 1894. In 1901, Dominion Census Officials found that Cumberland House had 191 residents, a Catholic Church, an Anglican Church and a total of 63 homes. In 1906, some local Métis took Treaty in Treaty 10.

By the late nineteenth century, Cumberland House had become an overwhelmingly Métis community as many Treaty First Nations were forced off the Treaty Rolls when they took scrip. Some of the Métis family names in Cumberland House, at this time, included: Carrière, Goulet, Dorion, Chaboyer, MacKay, MacAuley, Fosseneuve, Morin, Cook and McGillivray. Prior to the late nineteenth century, some of Cumberland House's leading families included the Isbister's and the Kennedy's. Two Métis from Cumberland House – William Kennedy who searched for the ill-fated Franklin Expedition and pioneered arctic navigation techniques and Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883) who played a large role in founding the University of Manitoba – were famous throughout the British Empire.

Captain William Kennedy [1814-1870]

Captain William Kennedy earned his reputation at sea. At an early age he was sent to be educated in Scotland by his father, a Hudson's Bay Company Post manager. He returned to **Rupert's Land** as a young man and worked for the Hudson's Bay Company until 1846.

At this time, the world was intrigued by the disappearance of Sir John Franklin in the Canadian Arctic. Twelve expeditions had failed to locate any sign of his party. In 1850, Lady Franklin hired William Kennedy to lead another search party. With a crew of seventeen, Kennedy, although not successful in locating Franklin, opened up and mapped new areas of the Arctic and located the northernmost tip of the North American continent. Kennedy's search party set new precedents in techniques of Arctic survival by adopting the manners and customs of the Inuit and First Nations people. Three Arctic locations have been named in honour of this Métis explorer: Port Kennedy, Kennedy Channel and Cape Kennedy.

When he returned to the Red River area, Kennedy became involved in the Métis struggle to break the **HBC monopoly** of the fur trade. In the 1860s, he built a beautiful stone house, which is now used as a museum. He was active in forming the Manitoba Historical Scientific Society, and gave its first address entitled, "The Northwest Passage."

Southern society began infringing on the traditional lifeways of the Cumberland House Métis in the nineteenth century. However, this trickle became an explosion during the early years of the twentieth century. The new province of Saskatchewan began exploiting the region's resources relatively early in the last century. In addition, non-Aboriginal trappers moved into the region after World War I and over-exploited resources and displaced Aboriginal trappers. In 1930, as a result of the *Natural Resource Transfer Agreement*, the government of Saskatchewan was given control of the province's resources. Provincial game officials began to more stringently regulate Métis trappers and hunters, in Cumberland House. The province also, starting in 1938, began building dams and

canals to spur growth in the muskrat population, which provided employment for many local Métis trappers. Two years later the first hospital in the community was constructed. After the war, the democratic-socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation government created the Spruce Island or "Farm Island" community farm as part of its Métis rehabilitation program. In 1962, two years after the HBC surrendered its lease lands south of the community to the province, construction of the "Squaw Rapids" Dam (now known as the E.B. Campbell Dam) adversely effected water levels in the delta, thus effecting floral and fauna populations. As a result, Métis trappers and hunters in the region had great difficulty harvesting resources. Other infrastructure arrived relatively late to Cumberland house; power came in 1968, telephones were installed only in 1971 and a bridge leading to the community was only constructed in the late 1990s.

III) The Archaeology at Cumberland House (Todd Paquin and Patrick Young)

In order to understand how archaeologists find a site, investigate a site, and put the pieces of the past back together, it is important to first understand a little bit about the science of archaeology. To begin with, archaeology is a sub-discipline of anthropology. By definition, anthropology is the study of human nature, human society and the human past. Archaeology is defined as the study of past human behaviour. Archaeologists are able to study past human behaviours by analyzing the materials that humans have left behind. Archaeologists call this **material culture** or **material remains**.

To locate the material remains of past human cultures and activities, archaeologists look for very specific things such as:

Archaeological sites: An archaeological site is an area or location that was used by either an individual or group of individuals, at any time in the past.

Artifacts: An artifact is any portable object made or modified by human activity. Some examples of artifacts are stone arrowheads, pottery fragments (called "potsherds"), bone tools, and basketry.

Ecofacts: Ecofacts are the remains of natural resources such as seeds or pollen, which provide clues about climate and available foods during some period in the past. Because ecofacts can provide clues about the diet of a past cultures, we say they have cultural meaning.

Features: An archaeological feature is a non-portable artifact, such as a posthole, a fire hearth, or a tipi ring. Features cannot be removed from an archaeological site without causing the site's physical destruction.

The Archaeological Process at Cumberland House

Archaeologists don't simply walk outside and find a site. First of all, some background research of the area is required. Quite often, there are reports detailing previous research carried out in the area. People who live in the area are usually quite happy to answer our questions. Sometimes they know exactly where a site is located! Local informants as well as old research reports were extremely important in locating the site of Old Cumberland House. As a matter of fact, when archaeologists arrived in Cumberland House in 1991, they had no idea where Samuel Hearne's fur trade post was located. However, reports by

two archaeological crews, from 1964 and 1967 respectively, were very important because they provided some clues for the 1991 crew.

In 1967, "test units" were excavated at 19 locations in an attempt to locate the old fort. A **test unit** is a small area that is excavated for the purpose of retrieving a "sample" of information about the area under review. It helps to identify the extent to which an area may or may not have been utilized in the past. As such, test excavations are extremely effective in helping to identify archaeological sites. Testing should always occur prior to carrying out any excavation activities at an archaeological site.

The report, summarizing the results of the 1967 excavations, was available to the crew of 1991, which meant they had some information to start with. There were also fur trade journals, fur trade correspondence records and historic maps of the area in the possession of the 1991 crew.

The other important source of information were local Elders and the President of the Cumberland House Historical Society. Local tradition and oral history placed Old Cumberland House in the vicinity of the old Anglican Mission site. The Reverend Benjamin MacKenzie established the Anglican Mission in 1876. The location of the mission is indicated on the Cumberland House Indian Reserve No. 20 map, drawn up in 1883. In addition to the map, a description given by Joseph B. Tyrrell of the Geological Survey of Canada, also placed Old Cumberland House at or near the location of the Anglican Mission.

The project director considered all the data. As a result, he decided to take a closer look at the area where the Anglican Mission had been located. Although

pot hunters had dug through various portions of the area during previous decades, a number of features still remained on the surface. Those features include two cellar depressions and the remains of two chimneys. The area was also one of the locations investigated by the 1967 crew. Their observations did not completely rule out this particular location as the site of the old fur trade post, but they felt the stone piles were too large to be considered remnants of former chimneys.

The 1991 archaeological crew soon cleared garbage, shrubs, bushes and fallen trees from the area. They were also successful in locating the site **datum**, which had been used during the 1967 excavations. A **datum** is a reference, or starting point for a grid system. As a result, a complete **grid system** was set out over the site. A **grid system** is a system for recording data from an archaeological excavation.

At Cumberland House, the surface of the site was divided into 1m x 1m squares. These squares are referred to as "units". Each unit was numbered and marked with a stake. The numeric designation for each unit was determined in relation to the site datum. An important result of implementing a grid system is that each recovered object can be located precisely in the square from which it came at

Grid systems and datum points are extremely important for archaeological research, because in archaeology, **context** is everything! While one artifact provides a certain amount of information, an archaeologist learns much more when an artifact is analyzed in relation to all other artifacts, ecofacts and features on the site! As you may have guessed already, by definition,

archaeological context refers to the culturally significant location of an artifact, ecofact or feature.

Context was an extremely important consideration for the archaeological crews who worked at Cumberland House in of 1991, 1992 and 1994. They had to consider the type of **sediment** in which each object was recovered, its **provenience** within the sediment, and its association to other objects. **Provenience** refers to the vertical and horizontal positioning of an object within sediment. For example, an artifact may be 6 cm. below surface (BS), 6 cm. north (of the south wall), and 3 cm. east (of the west wall). As confusing as that might sound, those three measurements are used to accurately locate any object recovered during excavation procedures.

Association refers to the position of an object in relation to other objects within the same sedimentary layer. Taken together, association and provenience help provide critical information regarding the context of material remains. In turn, context necessarily provides important information about past human activities and cultures.

By the end of the 1991 field season, the project director was not entirely convinced that this location was really the site of **Old Cumberland House**. There was some suspicion that it was the old Anglican Mission site. The reason for this uncertainty was the recovery of a substantial number of nineteenth century artifacts. If this really was the site of Old Cumberland House from the late eighteenth century, why were nineteenth century artifacts so abundant?

Artifacts Found at the Site of Old Cumberland House

There were also many distinctive fur trade artifacts of both of European and Aboriginal origin recovered from the site. In many cases, fur trade artifacts are broken down into three categories:

- 1) **personal items**
- 2) **functional items**
- 3) **miscellaneous items**

Personal items are the most abundant items recovered from fur trade posts. Old Cumberland House was no exception in this regard. Personal items found at the old fort include beads, finger rings, and **tinkling cones**, which were rolled pieces of copper or brass used as adornment on clothing. Aboriginal people often cut up brass or copper kettles in order to make tinkling cones.

Other personal items include brass HBC buttons, stone pipes and clay pipes, which have been recovered. It is impossible to determine who owned those items. Two fragments of stone **micmac** pipes were also found at the site. The term micmac became an anthropological label for Aboriginal pipes soon after Europeans arrived in North America. In time, the micmac pipe became associated with tobacco smoking and ceremonial events — the **Trading Ceremony** would be a good example. In addition to the stone pipe fragments, one red clay pipe fragment was also recovered at the old fur trade post. It does not appear to be European in origin as it is meticulously incised by hand, with designs that suggest a Aboriginal origin.

Some of the eighteenth century artifacts found at the site provide secure dates. White clay pipes are a clear indication of an eighteenth century occupation. Although pipe smoking was largely limited to the upper class during the late seventeenth century, by the eighteenth century smoking had become firmly established within all levels of society. Clay pipes were made from ball clay which was a mixture of mica, carbon and iron oxide. The manufacturers of clay pipes marked the bowls of their pipes with their logos. The TD logo was one of the more frequent marks displayed on pipes. In Western Canada, there were 3 companies that manufactured TD logo clay pipes: Ford/Stepney; William White & Sons, and; McDougall. Ford/Stepney was the principal supplier of TD clay pipes to the HBC from 1831 - 1870.

In terms of **functional items**, a curious metal artifact was recovered at the site — a **strike-a-light** fragment. A strike-a-light was used to start a fire — it looked like a pair of brass knuckles. A flint was struck against the strike a light in order to produce a spark. The match later replaced this system of starting a fire. Other functional items recovered from the site were made of metal. Objects made of metal were sometimes traded for, not because of the object, but because of the material, which was later transformed into a wide range of other items, such as metal points and trinkets.

The final category, entitled **miscellaneous**, encompasses those materials not considered personal or functional. At Cumberland House, these include a number of shotgun shells, lead shot, a gun flint, bale seals, a bale ring, metal artifacts such as knife fragments, bells, a triangular file tip fragment, and several bone artifacts whose function is not entirely clear. Of the bone artifacts, there is a piece of finely worked bird bone, which is neatly incised all the way around the

bone shaft. There is also a piece of bone that has been shaped and blunted around the edges. There is red pigment on one end of the bone. Perhaps this was used as a paint applicator.

The bale seals and the bale ring are directly associated with fur trade operations. When furs arrived at Cumberland House, they were bundled in bales and shipped to York Factory, and then on to Europe. The gunflints, lead shot and powder flasks are all related to flintlock muzzle loading rifles and muskets. The flintlock musket was a common fur trade firearm, used by fur traders, well into the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Shotgun shells were not available until the middle of the nineteenth century.

There remains yet another category of archaeological remains that do not really fit into any of the foregoing artifact categories. What are these remains? They are all animal (or faunal) remains excavated and recovered from Old Cumberland House. These are extremely important because they tell us about the foods people ate at Cumberland House 200 years ago. Faunal remains also tell us how carcasses were cut up and how the food might have been prepared.

The most abundant type of faunal remains are sturgeon, an ancient species made up of cartilage, rather than bone. Many complete and fragmented pieces of sturgeon scute were recovered during excavation activities. In addition, fish vertebrae, fish ribs, fish scales and shellfish remains were also recovered. There was also a variety of small mammal remains encountered at the site such as beaver, muskrat, rabbit and bird bone.

The large mammal bones provide the greatest amount of information about food processing and preparation. Several moose bones exhibit spiral fracturing which means the bones were broken to get at the marrow. A fairly large number of small-smashed bone fragments were also recovered. This is a good indication of bone boiling and grease extraction for the purpose of making pemmican. If this is true, there is clearly a strong *Métis* and/or First Nations presence at the site of Old Cumberland House.

Both eighteenth and nineteenth century artifacts have been found at the site. What did this mean? Well, let's consider the types of artifacts recovered. Of particular interest are a number of **transfer printed** ceramic kitchenware fragments. **Transfer printing** refers to a technique in which a "print" is applied to the unglazed surface of a ceramic vessel. The vessel is then fired at a low temperature in order to fix the design. The final stages involve an application of glaze and another firing at a high temperature.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, deep blue transfer prints were very common, and a substantial number of these fragments were recovered from the site. Some of these have been identified as **Spode/Copeland** wares. This is significant because the Spode/Copeland Company supplied tableware and toiletware to the HBC from 1836 to the early 20th century. Why would nineteenth century artifacts show up at an eighteenth century site?

A number of diagnostic glass bottles and bottle fragments were also recovered. Several of these had very clear **maker's marks** on them. A manufacturer of a product will put his company's "mark" on any product being produced. One

example from the site was a glass stopper marked "**Eno's Prepared by Patent**". This maker's mark was dated to the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. Also dated to the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries was a **Perry Davis Vegetable Painkiller** medicine bottle. If you look very closely at the bottle, you can see the words of the maker's mark on different areas of the bottle.

Other easily datable artifacts are construction nails. The earliest technology associated with the manufacture of nails was the **hand-wrought** method of manufacture. Many of the early forms had a **spatula tip**. Others tapered to a point at the end of the nail. The four sides of a hand wrought nail shank were equal in width. Hand wrought nails were manufactured through the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Typically, they had either a "T-head" or a "Rose head".

When machine forged (or machine cut) nails were first manufactured, the shanks often had a beveled facet on one side. This was caused by pressure exerted from the die. Machine cut nails were first manufactured in 1790, but the nail heads had to be attached by hand. By 1815 - 1830, machine-cut nails with machine cut heads were also being produced. Typically, a machine cut nail shank **did not** have four sides of equal width. Instead, two sides were narrow but equal in width, while the two other sides were wide and equal in width. By 1850, **wire** (round) nails were being produced.

Considering the availability of information regarding nail technology and manufacture, it should be easy to assign a date to any nail recovered from a site. In some cases, this is true. However, potential problems do exist. An archaeologist must always remember that even though machine cut nail

technology has been in place since 1790, hand wrought nails continued to be forged well into the nineteenth century. Another point must also be considered. Nails may be used again and again. Since both hand wrought and machine cut nails were found at the site in 1991, there had to be a more definite means to identify the occupational history of the site.

Determining that the Site was indeed Fort Cumberland House

On the other hand, the crew did encounter some interesting features at this location. The rotted remains of two posts along the eastern edge of the site were exposed. These ran parallel to a large rock ridge running north-south along the edge of the site. They also uncovered the rotted remains of eight posts along the northern edge of the site. The crew was not sure if the posts were the remains of a trading post stockade or a fence built during the Mission period. So, by the end of the 1991 field season, the crew had an entirely new set of questions to answer.

When the archaeological crew returned to the site in 1992, they expanded upon the excavation block of the previous year. During this second season, it became clear that this really was the site of Old Cumberland House. How did the crew reach this conclusion? To begin with, they noticed something very interesting about the sedimentary layers in which the artifacts were recovered. The site was not uniform. Some areas remained undisturbed — other, extensive areas of the site were very disturbed. What did this mean to the archaeologists?

In areas of the site where the original fur trade soil surface was not disturbed, eighteenth century building remains covered and protected it. In other areas of the site, just below the forest floor, a sedimentary layer 3 to 5 cm thick covered

the eighteenth century remains. This particular layer was made up of yellow sandy silt. This indicates a major flood event. It would have had to occur after the HBC abandoned the site and moved to its more recent location.

Just as interesting, in most areas of the site, the sandy silt layer covered a layer of gray, friable sandy clay, extending as deep as 30 - 35 cm. What does this indicate? It suggests much of the site had been plowed or cultivated, likely for gardening. It is also within this plow zone that both eighteenth and nineteenth century artifacts were recovered. This tells us two things. Gardening activities would have disturbed the fur trade occupation levels, hence the presence of eighteenth century artifacts. The presence of nineteenth century artifacts suggests that it was gardened by someone many years after the post was abandoned.

Let's go back and review the data for a moment. First of all, the flood had to occur after the area had been gardened. Why? Because the evidence for flooding is on top of the "level" that was gardened. That leaves us with the following question: "who gardened at the site?" There are two possible explanations:

- 1) after the post was abandoned in 1794, Company labourers continued to garden at this location, or;
- 2) when the Mission was established in 1876, clergy and staff built a garden at the site.

Fur trade records suggest the former scenario is the more likely of the two explanations. Similarly, the common dark blue transfer prints found on the kitchenware fragments suggest that the area was gardened prior to the establishment of the Anglican Mission in 1876.

So the big question remains: "How did the archaeologists conclude that the site was Old Cumberland House?" Well, they first considered all the data:

- 1) The types and dates of artifacts
- 2) The occupational history of the site evident in site stratigraphy
- 3) The fact that there was more than one large chimney mound suggests that several good sized buildings were once at the location
- 4) In addition to the rotted remains of posts found in 1991, two 2 corners of the stockade were exposed in 1992, while a 3rd corner was exposed in 1994.
- 5) Evidence of a gate along the north wall of the stockade was encountered in 1994 as well.

By combining this data with historical documents and previous archaeological reports, it was easily decided — this is definitely the site of Samuel Hearne's fur trade post.

Cumberland House Timeline:

Precontact Ancestral Cree people gathered at gathering centres in the Saskatchewan River Valley region, such as Misipawistik, Cimawawin, Opaskewyaw, Paskwatinow, Nipowinwinihk, and Pehonan. Subsistence activities were based on moose hunting, beaver snaring and fishing. In the more southerly region, Bison hunting would have been practiced in the winter as herds moved north.

1772 Matthew Cocking of the HBC observed that Opaskewyaw was a traditionally frequented place where Canadian fur traders rendezvous and trade with the Aboriginal peoples.

1772 The first trading post built by Joseph Frobisher of the NWC on Cumberland Lake, known as Pine Island Lake or Sturgeon Lake.

1774 Samuel Hearne established the first HBC inland post at Cumberland House to compete with the rival French-Canadian post established in the region. Hearne stated that the reason for the site of Cumberland House was that it was on the borders of three or four tribes, which may have been regional bands of the Cree residents of the area.

1778 Cumberland House declined in importance and value as Norway House in Northern Manitoba became a HBC major centre for fur-trading activities. However Cumberland House became an important pemmican depot and supplier of country produce for passing of northern brigades.

1779 William Tomison of the HBC built Hudson House on the Saskatchewan River to expand the HBC inland trade. This decision was based on the HBC's competition for furs with the NWC.

1781-82 Smallpox spread through most of the resident population in the Saskatchewan River Valley and Cumberland House. William Tomison an HBC clerk believed that all the Opaskweyaw people had died. Some survived but disease effected the entire lifestyle of the local Indian and Métis people. The Métis people fared better than their Indian relations due to the inherited immunity from their European fathers.

1790 A trading post at Fort Lac des Boeufs was built by the Northwest Company to draw trade away from the HBC.

1763-1821 Fur trade rivalries are strong between the HBC and Montréal-based companies in Rupert's Land.

1819 One of the Franklin expeditions, bound for exploration of the Polar Sea, stopped at Cumberland House.

1820 The fur trade became heavily dependent on muskrat because of over trapping of other species. As a result, Cumberland House fared well because of its rich muskrat resources. The market for muskrat skins was strong in the British North American colonies and in the United States Métis trappers in Cumberland House received a good price for the muskrat skins they traded.

1821 The official merger of the NWC and HBC fur trade companies. Posts were downsized or closed at such traditional meeting centres as Nipowiwinihk (Nippon). All the posts were closed except Cumberland House. However, winter-spring outposts emerged at several local rendezvous centres and Métis free traders still operated in the region.

1824 George Simpson reported low water levels in Cumberland and disease among the Muskrat population which had a detrimental impact on the local economy. This was a difficult year for Indian and Métis families.

1825 Muskrats reappear in Cumberland due to moist conditions, which helped the local economy recover from previous resource shortages. This was a good year for Métis families who were dependent on muskrats for income and subsistence.

1826 The beginning of York Boat freighting on Cumberland House waterways resulting in the employment of numerous Cumberland House Métis residents. Many Métis were employed in freighting and packing for the HBC.

1827 A letter from George Simpson of the HBC requests that Indians and Métis focus on Muskrat trapping in order to give beaver time to replenish

1828 A dry year in the Saskatchewan River Delta area which effected the local economy of Cumberland House.

1835-1838 Another small pox epidemic killed one-third of the Plains Indians and devastated many Indian and Métis peoples in the Cumberland House region.

1839 The Anglican Church established a mission at Cumberland House at the request of Governor Simpson to educate the local Indian and Métis residents.

1842 Reverend Henry Budd (1812-1875) , the first Aboriginal Indian-Métis to be ordained in Western Canada, started a school at Cumberland House.

1850 The best days of Cumberland House as a HBC depot and fur post had passed due to the shifting of trade patterns and a decline in its natural resources.

1853 The Bishop of Rupert's Land advocated the use of Cree syllabics in the Cumberland House school to teach children how to read the bible. A Métis woman named Jane Ross helped to translate the Bible into Cree.

1860 Thomas Cook, a catechist, came to Cumberland House to teach syllabics to the women who, in turn, taught them to their children.

1862 Because Cumberland House was part of Rupert's Land, a territory granted by the Crown to the HBC in 1670, the local land claims of the First Nations and Métis residents have not been officially recognized.

1867 Confederation creates the Dominion of Canada. Plans were soon underway to incorporate the vast resource rich territory of Rupert's Land into the new Dominion.

1869 There is an inflow of southern Métis into the Northwest and Cumberland House after the 1869 Métis Resistance. In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company sold most of Rupert's land without consulting Aboriginal residents.

1873 A massive ice jam causes the Saskatchewan River to overflow its banks into the Torch River and to cut a path into Cumberland Lake, totally abandoning its former course. This impairs local trapping and hunting activities of the Indian and Métis people.

1875 Father O. Charlebois founded the St. Joseph's Roman Catholic mission at Cumberland House. The Church plays an important role in the education of the Métis.

1876 The signing of Treaty Number 5 took place between the Canadian government and the Cree. Many Métis families from Cumberland House and La Pas, Manitoba entered into this treaty as Indians.

1885 The last "spike" was driven in the Craigellochie Pass, British Columbia. By this time, the southern fur trade was in decline, in contrast to that of the north, where it was still an important economic activity for Métis and First Peoples.

1880s-1930s Steamboats traveled the North Saskatchewan River between lake Winnipeg and Edmonton. Some Cumberland House residents, such as Steamboat Bill from Cumberland House, were employed as steamboat operators.

1885 The Métis Resistance at Batoche took place under the leadership of Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel. The Métis residents of Cumberland House were not actively involved in these events. However, they felt the long term effects of the government suppression of Métis rights and land claims that from the struggle.

1886 The steamer *Northcote*, which carried ammunitions to the Canadian military during the North West Resistance, was beached at Cumberland House permanently.

1887 Canadian government sent scrip commissioners to Cumberland House to take scrip applications. As a result many Métis were taken off the treaty pay lists in order to receive scrip.

1894 Father O. Charlebois saw completion of the Roman Catholic church at Cumberland House.

1896 Increased settlement of North Saskatchewan brought more southern trappers to compete with the northern Métis and Indian trappers. This created a great deal of pressure on the local resource base.

1901 Canadian census officials travelled to Cumberland House. There were 191 people living in the community at this time. Census officials also recorded buildings in the community. In 1901, there was one Anglican and one Roman Catholic church each in the community, as well as 63 homes.

1905 Cumberland House became part of the province of Saskatchewan. All Cumberland House residents are to receive services such as health care and education, from the new provincial government. However, the church and the HBC still provide the community with most of its services.

1906 Treaty 10 was signed in Northern Saskatchewan which gave the government title to Indian and Métis lands. The government of Saskatchewan was interested in developing the resources of the Northern regions. Cumberland House and other communities begin to see the arrival of southern developers.

1909-1910 The railway was built from Prince Albert to Big River. Northern communities are becoming more connected to southern Saskatchewan.

1914-1918 World War I, during which many Métis people left from Cumberland House to fight for Canada overseas. This had a great social, economic and psychological impact on the entire community.

1920 There was an increase of non-Aboriginal hunters and trappers after WWI. This created increased competition for local resources.

1925 Steamers ended their service to Cumberland House. This caused Cumberland House to decline in importance as a major distribution depot and transportation centre for the fur trade.

1928 Drought dried up the Cumberland marshes destroying the homes of many animal species. There was a depression which ruined the local economy lowering fur prices.

1930 The Natural Resource Transfer Agreement was negotiated between the federal and provincial governments. Now Cumberland House Métis trappers and hunters are regulated by provincial game officials. The local Anglican Church is destroyed by a forest fire that was put out before reaching the community of Cumberland House.

1936 A fire sweeps through Pemmican Portage, a few kilometres from Cumberland House, destroying resources and harming local ecosystems. The depression of 1929-1939 had a great impact in Southern and Northern Saskatchewan because both areas were over dependent on natural resources for income at a time when markets declined, incomes dropped and natural environments experienced climatic disasters.

1938 Dams, canals and other water control measures were installed to help increase muskrat production. Many local Métis residents received employment from these projects.

1939-1946 During WW II a number of Cumberland House Métis residents served in the Canadian military. This once again had a great effect on the community.

1940 A hospital built out of logs was constructed at Cumberland House and commercial fishing was in full swing.

1942 The Hudson's Bay Company store and warehouse were demolished by fire.

1943 The Hudson' Bay Company store and warehouse were rebuilt.

1944 The C.C.F. Government was elected in Saskatchewan, replacing the Liberals. Social and economic conditions in the north were a priority with the newly elected government.

1946 Spruce Island (commonly called Farm Island) was established as a community farm as part of the Saskatchewan government's social rehabilitation program for Northern Métis communities.

1947 Agriculture was introduced in the form of an experimental farm by the Saskatchewan Natural Resources Department. Machinery began to move into the north.

1948 The Saskatchewan Government Trading Store was established to break the monopoly held by private traders. The store eventually became co-operatively owned in 1959 by Cumberland House residents. This gave Cumberland House people better prices for consumer goods.

1948 A flood destroyed the Métis experimental farm and flooded many homes. The dikes and ditches set up for muskrat conservation were washed away.

1940-1960 The HBC carried out educational programs for muskrat farming. Increased fur returns after years of poor fur harvesting demonstrate Saskatchewan's effective conservation policies.

1954 Anthropologist Victor Valentine studied conditions in such northern communities as Cumberland House. Project funding was supplied by the Department of Natural Resources. Valentine indicated that there was a need to end the HBC trading monopoly in the community and raise the regional income based on fur-trapping. These were two measures, which would have brought more competition to the industry.

1960 The Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its land south of Cumberland House to the province of Saskatchewan

1960 J.E.M Kew, an anthropologist, studied the social and economic conditions at Cumberland House. He made several recommendations on how to deal with chronic unemployment, which plagued the community. He also recommended that the government develop health, educational and communications infrastructure in order to alleviate poor social conditions within the community.

1962 The construction of the Squaw Rapids Dam by the provincial government severely affected lake levels in Cumberland House, which in turn created difficulties for trapping and hunting.

1964 The first formal complaint about water level problems at Cumberland House was received by Ross Thatcher, premier of Saskatchewan. Meanwhile, a power line to Cumberland House was built. A brief archaeological survey of historic sites in the area was carried out.

1965 Establishment of the Northern Community Area #3 allowed Cumberland House Local Community Authority the power to pass local by-laws and levy local taxes. Cumberland House gets an economic boost when both an all-weather road from Nipawin and a curling rink was completed.

1967 An intensive archaeological survey was carried out to locate the old HBC fort at Cumberland House established by Samuel Hearne.

1968 Cumberland House is finally connected to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and the provincial electric system. The community was becoming more modernized and influenced by southern industry.

1969 The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation formed. However, commercial fishing on the Saskatchewan River was banned due to mercury contamination.

1971 Telephones were installed in Cumberland House, which helped to breakdown the isolation felt by the community.

1972 Department of Northern Saskatchewan (D.N.S.) was created the provincial government in November. The DNS has a great impact on the trappers and hunters in Cumberland House. DNS managed resources by enforcing game laws and providing social services to northern residents.

1973 Northern Municipal Council was established in Cumberland House.

1974 This year saw the 200th Anniversary of Cumberland House. Almost every family owned a telephone, television, a car or a half-ton truck. School enrolment over the past 10 years had doubled.

1991 The University of Saskatchewan's Department of Archaeology and Anthropology conducted excavations at Cumberland House during the years of 1991, 1992 and 1994.

1995 Construction began on the Cumberland House bridge to connect the community to the outside world. Previous to construction the only access to the community was by canoe, ferry or over the winter road.

Questions and Activities:

- 1) Outline the impact of the early fur trade upon this community. Based on the local natural environment, what kinds of subsistence activities did the Métis and Cree engage in around the posts?
- 2) What is Archaeology and how does it help us to understand the lives which past people lived? Why would archaeologists provide more insights into the daily lives of the people in the site of Old Cumberland House than any historical document or book?
- 3) How did the archaeologists find the site of Cumberland House, which has been lost for a very long time? What sorts of "fur trade" artifacts were found at the Old Cumberland House site? What sort of floral and fauna remains were found and what does this tell us? Can you think of other kinds of remains and finds that would interest archaeologists at this busy and interesting site? What sorts of consumer artifacts were found?
- 4) The Old Cumberland House site is rich in cultural artifacts. What does this tell us about human interaction among European traders and the Aboriginal population? Is it easy to see how the Métis community of Cumberland House may have emerged given the large number of First Nations items and European trade goods found at the site?
- 5) What could the Old Cumberland House site tell us about how the land, and by extension, the environment, was used by Métis and other Aboriginal people in the recent past? Could the study of Archeology bolster one's knowledge of environmental issues, why or why not?
- 6) Go to a museum and study some Aboriginal artifacts, which have been found by archeologists. Find a few items, which interest you, take a photo, and sketch them. Then find information about how these items were used. Then write a brief report about the item and present it to your class. You can find out more about Archeology by writing to your local archaeological societies, by visiting the World Wide Web or your local Heritage Canada site or by contacting archeologists in the Anthropology department of your local university.
- 7) What was the nature of the relationship between Cumberland House's Aboriginal population and the fur traders? Discuss the lives of Captain William Kennedy and Samuel Hearne in this context. How were these two men, both products of Hudson's Bay Company policy, different in outlook, goals and loyalty to the "Company"? Go to the library for extra material, particularly from the **Dictionary of Canadian Biography**, if you wish.
- 8) Why were First Nations women so important to the survival of this and other fur trade posts?
- 9) Historically, what impact did the Church have upon the Cumberland House Métis?
- 10) A number of important events took place for the Métis people outside of Cumberland House and while the Métis in the community were not directly affected by these events, the impact of these was felt in this community. How were the Cumberland House Métis affected by the 1870 and 1885 Resistances?

The Treaty and the Scrip process? Euro-Canadian settlement in southern and central-Saskatchewan? The Saskatchewan government's attempts to alleviate the social distress of the province's northern Métis?

11) Write an environmental profile of Cumberland House. What sort of animal and plant resources did (do) Cumberland House area Aboriginal people use? Would the natural cycle of the Cumberland House Métis more resemble that of other Aboriginal people in boreal forest environments in Central and Eastern Canada or the Plains environment in Prairie Canada? How have Aboriginal people interacted with the environment in Cumberland House? Have any resources become exhausted from over use? What pressing environmental issues does the community face? Make a map of the region outlining the area's physical and human geography, including land use patterns and remaining floral and fauna deposits.

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