

# Historischer Rückblick

## Episode 1:

### A Beaver's Tale: The Hudson's Bay Company's Role In The Mapping Of Canada

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# Overview of the learning unit

## **Episode 1:**

### **A Beaver's Tale: The Hudson's Bay Company's Role In The Mapping Of Canada**

## **Episode 2:**

### **The Exploration Of Canada's Far North In The 19th Century: A North-West Passage Discovered**

## **Episode 3:**

### **Interview with the lecturer**

# Learning target of the episode

## **Lernziel 1 (Wissenswiedergabe):**

Sie können die einzelnen Entwicklungsstufen bei der Kartografierung Kanadas durch die Hudson's Bay Company benennen.

## **Lernziel 2 (Wissenstransfer):**

Sie können eine Forschungsfrage aus historischer Perspektive entwickeln und Ansätze für ein mögliches Forschungsvorhaben entwickeln.

## **Lernziel 3 (Reflexion und Problemlösung):**

Sie können sich mit der gesellschaftlichen Dimension des Pelzhandels differenziert auseinandersetzen und deren Auswirkung auf die Situation der Ureinwohner Kanadas anwenden.

# Topics

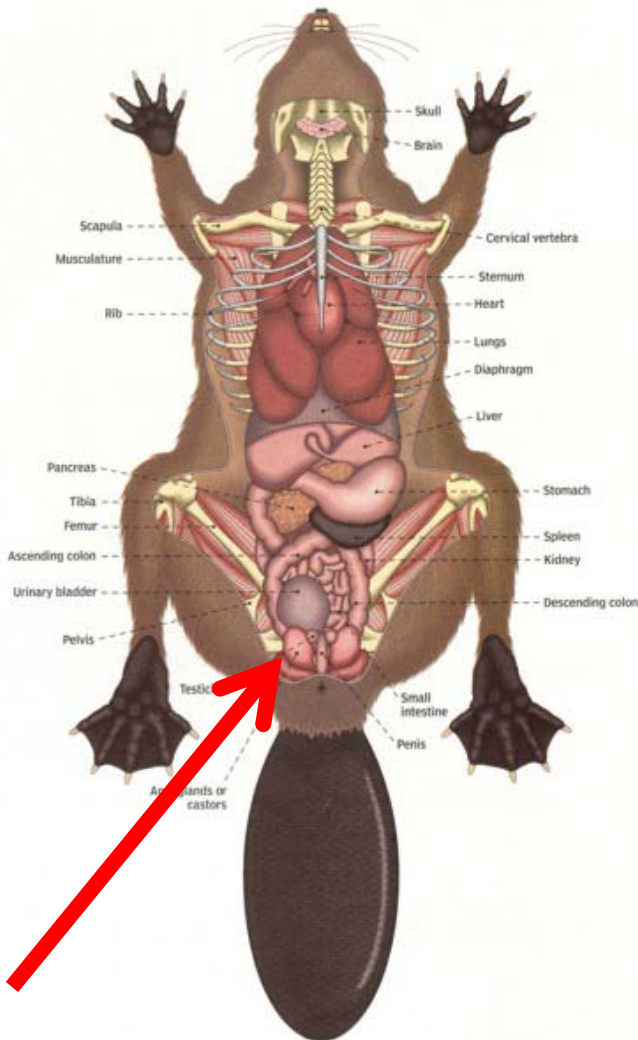
1. Introduction
2. The beaver as a natural resource
3. Hudson's final voyage
4. The Hudson's Bay Company – The foundation of an empire
5. The North West Company as a rivalling enterprise
6. The mapping of a country as an economic necessity
7. The Hudson's Bay Company in the 19th and 20th century

# Introduction



*„The beaver, by its defenselessness, no less than by its value, was responsible for unrolling the map of Canada“ – Eric W. Morse*

# Introduction



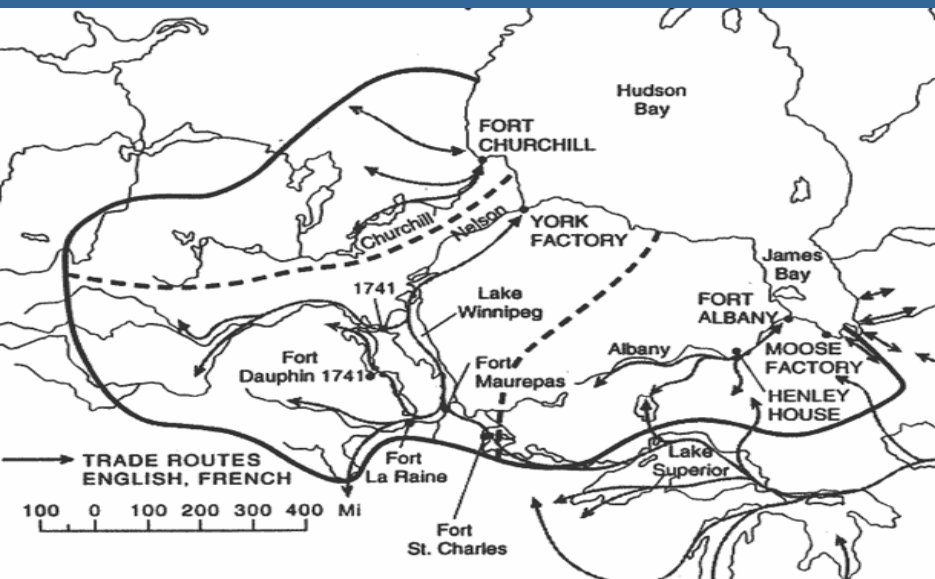
- Fur as talisman and indicator of social position
- Not only fur but scent glands as object of trade
- Reason: medical substance that could cure headaches through same substance like Aspirin
- Between 1808 and 1828 ten tons of castoreum exported by HBC
- In 1854 509.000 pelts auctioned off in London alone

# Henry Hudson's Last Voyage



- First voyage in 1607 on the search for a way to Carthay
- Received royal attention through successful voyage of discovery in 1609
- Search for North West Passage in 1610, found Hudson's Strait and Hudson's Bay
- Perished without a hint of his last resting place

# The Hudson's Bay Company



- Over 17th and 18th century, London felting and hatting industry was growing
- Two fortuitous events:
  1. Treaty of Breda in 1667
  2. George Cartwright and Sir Robert Carr meeting Métard Chouart and Pierre Esprit Radisson
- Royal charter granted in 1670 under the title „Gouverneur and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay“



# The North West Company

- Foundation of North West Company in 1779 as joint stock company
- Leading French traders replaced by Americans and especially Scots Highlanders in 1763
- Highlanders especially adaptable to environment
- By 1811, exclusive trading rights in region from Rockies to Pacific Ocean
- System led to financial difficulties

# Mapping A Country

- Maps crucial to the pursuit of profit
- Became calculable business documents
- Mapping was not intended but became necessary in the process
- Employees supported in process of mapmaking
- Maps served different purposes
- Experience of mappers varied widely
- Natives played essential role in map-making and exploration

## The HBC In The 19th And 20th Century

- HBC and NWC merged in 1821 and left HBC virtually with monopoly over fur trade in British North America
- HBC hands over proprietorship over Rupert's Land to Dominion of Canada
- Refocused business, first retail store in 1881
- By 1920 largest retailer in Western Canada, expanded throughout Canada after WWII
- HBC stores stopped selling fur products in 1991

# The History Of Canada

*“The history of Canada has been profoundly influenced by the habits of an animal which very fittingly occupies a prominent place on her coat of arms. The beaver was of dominant importance in the beginnings of the Canadian fur trade. It is impossible to understand the characteristic developments of the trade or of Canadian history without some knowledge of its life and habits.”*

*H. A. Inns: The Fur Trade in Canada*

## Exercises for Self Study

1. Informieren Sie sich in der einschlägigen Literatur über den Effekt des Niedergangs des Pelzhandels für die ansässigen Ureinwohner. Welche Konsequenzen hatte das Ausbleiben des Tauschhandels mit den Europäern?
2. Die Hudson's Bay Company und die North West Company standen in anhaltender Konkurrenz zueinander. Welche politischen Auswirkungen hatte diese Konkurrenz lokal bzw. international oder dominierten eher externe politische Einflüsse dieses Verhältnis?
3. Diskutieren Sie folgende These: „Der Pelzhandel und die daraus resultierende Anbindung der Ureinwohner an die europäischen Siedler hatte einen positiven Effekt auf die Integration der Ureinwohner in den entstehenden Staat Kanada.“

## References

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- ROYLE, STEPHEN: *Company, Crown and Colony. The Hudson's Bay Company and Territorial Endeavour in Western Canada.* New York 2011.
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