Pre-Visit Information

To the Student:
Welcome to Fort Nisqually Living History Museum. What you will see during your visit is a reconstruction of Fort Nisqually as it looked in the year 1855. The original location for Fort Nisqually was 16 miles south of its present day location in Point Defiance Park, near the town of DuPont. During the 1930s, Fort Nisqually's last two standing buildings were moved to their present day site in the park.

History is about people and their experiences. Your visit to Fort Nisqually will be a journey to discover what life was like for the people who lived on the Puget Sound 150 years ago. The following facts about Fort Nisqually are presented as a good place to start your journey into the past:

- Fort Nisqually was not a military fort but a business built by the British owned and operated Hudson’s Bay Company.
- Fort Nisqually was the first permanent, globally connected settlement to be established on the Puget Sound.
- Fort Nisqually contains two wooden buildings that are amongst the oldest in the State of Washington.
- Fort Nisqually was a place where Europeans and Native Americans lived with each other as neighbors.
- Fort Nisqually owned over 150,000 acres where they raised animals and crops for food.

We hope that your visit to Fort Nisqually brings history to life and that you return to enjoy the many special events that we have throughout the year.

The Staff at Fort Nisqually
The Hudson's Bay Company

An Overview

More than three centuries ago, before the invention of the umbrella, nobility in Europe discovered that headgear made out of beaver fur provided an elegant way to keep dry. There was much more to this fashion than just practicality. The wealth and importance of a man or woman could be shown by the hat they wore. As one historian put it, “...to own a fine beaver was to prove one's standing as a man or woman.”

It was this demand for luxury hats that prompted King Charles II of England to grant a charter in 1670 to wealthy investors wanting to operate a fur trading business out of Hudson's Bay. The charter referred to these wealthy investors as "the Company of Adventurers". Headquartered in London, The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) would be run by a group of managers called "the Committee".

The beavers led the Company's fur trading activity deeper into the North American wilderness. When a creek was trapped or "beavered out" hunters had to move further west into new lands.

For the next two centuries, the Hudson's Bay Company would withstand stiff competition from French and Canadian fur traders. By the time Fort Nisqually was built in 1833, the HBC had gained control over 3 million square miles of land (approximate size of the present United States).

By 1870, most of the land controlled by the HBC was returned to the British government to create the country of Canada. Today the Hudson's Bay Company is still in business. The Bay Company, as it is now called, is the largest department store chain in Canada.
The Hudson's Bay Company in the Pacific Northwest

By the early 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company had established a network of posts from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Northwest. Built on the north bank of the Columbia River was Fort Vancouver (located in present day Vancouver, Washington). This fort was the largest depot in the Northwest and was the main supply center for the rest of the forts in the region.

During the summer, Fort Vancouver's warehouses would fill with the furs brought in from smaller forts and these furs were then prepared for shipment back to England. Arriving from England came large ships filled with cargoes or "outfits" of manufactured goods. At Fort Vancouver, the goods were repackaged into smaller outfits for the other forts. Small ships, river canoes, or packhorses were used to supply the posts that operated from the Rocky Mountains to the Alaska panhandle.

In 1833, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to expand their business into the Puget Sound region and built Fort Nisqually. This outpost would accomplish two things. First, the local Indians now had a convenient place to exchange their furs rather than having to travel the great distances to Fort Vancouver, to the south, or Fort Langley to the north. Secondly, the British wanted to increase their presence and claim the Oregon Territory. At this time, the territory was being shared with the United States under a treaty of joint occupancy.

By 1855, the period we capture today at Fort Nisqually, some major changes occurred that had a major impact on Fort Nisqually. First, the British did not succeed in claiming the Puget Sound as their own. In 1846, the Oregon Territory was divided along the 49' parallel and the Sound became part of the United States. Fort Nisqually was now a British company on American soil. Secondly, the beaver was disappearing because of over trapping and the popularity of silk hats ushered in the rapid decline of the fur trade.
Fort Nisqually

Today Fort Nisqually Living History Museum is a reconstruction of the fort as it appeared in the year 1855. Fort Nisqually was originally built 16 miles south of its present Point Defiance Park location, close to the historic towns of Steilacoom and DuPont. In the 1930s, the two remaining fort buildings were relocated to the park because they were no longer wanted by the Du Pont Company, who then owned Fort Nisqually's original site.

Unlike the grove of trees that the fort is situated in now, Fort Nisqually was originally built on one of the great expanses of prairie country that made up a large portion of southern Puget Sound geography. Fort Nisqually was located a half mile inland from the Sound and next to Sequalitchew Creek, from which drinking and irrigation water could be drawn.

The park-like prairie country that the Hudson's Bay Company found ideal for an outpost was home to a Native American tribal group called the Sequalitchew Nisqually. Like many northwest tribes, nature provided the Nisqually with an abundance of seafood from the coastal waters and salmon from the rivers and streams. The Nisqually relied heavily on the cedar trees to provide them with the materials they needed for everyday life. Large cedar planks were split to build dwelling houses. Cedar bark was shredded to weave intricate baskets or made into clothing. The Sequalitchew Nisqually would quickly fit into the fabric of daily life at Fort Nisqually. They traded furs, fish and wild game for trade goods such as tobacco, blankets, and cloth. The local natives were also hired as day laborers as Fort Nisqually's need for workers grew.

As you explore Fort Nisqually, you will discover what life was like at the first permanent Euro-American settlement on the Puget Sound. You will be seeing some of the oldest standing wooden structures in the State of Washington.

Look around and experience what life was like for the people who lived here more than 150 years ago.
Fort Nisqually, Washington Territory, 1855

With the decline of the Fur Trade, the Hudson's Bay Company took advantage of the abundant resources to be found in the Pacific Northwest. The Company produced barrels of salmon and lumber that were exported to markets in Hawaii and California. Fort Nisqually became headquarters of a vast farming operation called the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. Over 150,000 acres around Fort Nisqually were claimed by the Company and used for raising sheep, cattle and horses. Of the 20 men that worked at Fort Nisqually, about half worked the Outstations that were scattered around the huge farm operation. From the thousands of sheep that were raised, Fort Nisqually exported wool back to England. To its customers in Russian America, Alaska today, the fort exported huge cargoes of wheat, meat and butter produced around Fort Nisqually.

Contract of Engagement

The men who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company had to sign a "contract of Engagement". This contract spelled out the length of their employment, what their duties were, and how much money they were to be paid.

Gentleman

Managers at Hudson's Bay Company forts were called Gentlemen. One of Fort Nisqually's Managers was Dr. William Fraser Tolmie. Tolmie was typical of the fur trade. He was a Scot Highlander by birth and held a very powerful position in the Company, that of a "Chief Factor".

Laborers

The men that did the hard farm work were called Laborers. Hawaiians or Kanakas as they were called often worked as shepherds at the outstations. The European managers were impressed with and valued the Kanakas physical strength and stamina to do the hard jobs required around the farm. 

“Old Cox a Sandwich Islander.”
Paul Kane 1847
The backbone of the fur trade was the **French-Canadian**. Master canoe paddlers, these men often served the Company as skilled tradesmen such as Blacksmiths and Carpenters.

**Scots, Hawaiians, French-Canadians, Englishmen and Native Americans** all worked together to make the farm at Fort Nisqually very productive.

**Women in Fur Trade Society**

The hardship, distance and danger of the fur trade frontier meant that very few European women lived at Hudson's Bay Company forts. Most of the men that worked at the outposts, gentlemen and laborers, married Native American women or women who were the offspring of a European/Native American marriage. The children of mixed ancestry were called **Metis** (pronounced: may-tee).
What Do You Know About Fort Nisqually

From your reading, answer the following questions.

1. Fort Nisqually was just one of many trading posts owned by a large British Company. What was the name of that company?

2. Many types of animal skins were taken in trade. The traders at Fort Nisqually most wanted what kind of animal skin?

3. In 1833 when Fort Nisqually was built, it was located on a large piece of land that was jointly occupied by both the United States and Canada. This land was called the?

4. What was the name of the tribe that lived near Fort Nisqually?

5. Fort Nisqually had two classes of employees. What were these classes?
   1. ___________________________  2. ____________________________

Words to know

A. Puget Sound Agricultural Company  E. French-Canadian
B. Crops and animals  F. Outfits
C. Prairies  G. Beaver
D. Metis  H. Forests

1. The children of a European/Native American marriage were called this?

2. The name for the cargoes of manufactured goods that arrived by ship from England?

3. When Fort Nisqually was in operation, much of the southern Puget Sound region was made up of this kind of geography?

4. By the 1850s, Fort Nisqually was headquarters for this branch of the Hudson's Bay Company?

5. These men were often master canoe paddlers and skilled tradesmen for the Hudson's Bay Company.

6. What did the Puget Sound Agricultural Company produce?
Can You Learn Chinook Jargon

Fort Nisqually was a crossroads of many different cultures. Scots, French-Canadians, Hawaiians, and Native Americans came together to work and trade but spoke different languages.

How did all these people communicate? To solve this problem a language of the fur trade was created. It was called "Chinook Jargon". In 1853 an American writer who had experienced the language wrote the following description: "It is a jargon of English, French, Spanish, Chinook, Kalapooja, Haida, and other tongues, civilized and savage".

Would you like to win a prize when you visit Fort Nisqually Living History Museum? At the beginning of the tour, raise your hand and volunteer that you can count from 1-10 in Chinook Jargon.

Below you will find the words for the numbers one to ten. They are pronounced the way they are spelled, just sound them out. GOOD LUCK!

**Go for it and win a prize!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Chinook Jargon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ikt -one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mokst - two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Klone - three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lakit - four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kwinnum - five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Taghum (tagum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sinamokst - seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stotekin - eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kwaist - nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tahtlum (tatlum) - ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**After Visit Activities**

The following activities are to be completed after your tour of Fort Nisqually.

Important: Review these activities before you take the tour of Fort Nisqually so that you will know what to look for and what questions you will want to ask.
What is it?

Inside the buildings are many objects that would have been at Fort Nisqually in the 1850s. Identify the following objects.

1. _____________________
2. _____________________
3. _____________________
4. _____________________
5. _____________________
6. _____________________

Word Search

1. **Hudson's Bay Co.** - British company that built Fort Nisqually.
2. **Trapper** - traded animal skins at Fort Nisqually.
3. **Fur Trade** - why Fort Nisqually was built.
4. **Bastion** - the corner towers at Fort Nisqually.
5. **Forge** - what a blacksmith uses to heat metal.
6. **Capote** - heavy wool coats made out of blankets.
7. **Beaver** - its fur was made into hats.
8. **Fort** - a stockaded trading post.
## Daily Life for Hudson's Bay Company Workers
Compare how life was different from our daily life today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hudson's Bay Company Worker</th>
<th>My Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of homes people live in.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of clothing for both men and women.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of food and how it is cooked.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of chores you do around the home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of transportation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of entertainment, games, or fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Daily Life for Hudson’s Bay Company Workers
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hudson’s Bay Company Worker</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Types of homes people lived in. | Timber dwellings (cabins)  
Post in Sill Style, wood houses. | |
| Types of clothing for both men and women. | Men-drop sleeve shirts, trousers w- suspenders, hats, boots.  
Women- dresses (long), shawls, bonnets. | |
| Types of food and how it was cooked. | Meats, garden vegetables, breads(hard bread)  
Cooked at fireplace, wood stove or outside fire. | |
| Types of chores you had to do around the home. | Make candles, soap, chop wood, tend to farm animals, prepare food, wash clothes by hand. | |
| Types of transportation. | Wagons, horses, canoes, boats, walking | |
| Types of entertainment, games, or fun. | Cards, playing musical instruments, dances or balls, rides in the country. | |

What Do You Know About Fort Nisqually

From your reading, answer the following questions.

1. Fort Nisqually was just one of many trading posts owned by a large British Company. What was the name of that company? [ ] Hudson’s Bay Company

2. Many types of animal skins were taken in trade. The traders at Fort Nisqually most wanted what kind of animal skin? [ ] Beaver

3. In 1833 when Fort Nisqually was built, it was located on a large piece of land that was jointly occupied by both the United States and Canada. This land was called the ? [ ] Oregon Territory

4. What was the name of the tribe that lived near Fort Nisqually? [ ] Sequatchew Nisqually

5. Fort Nisqually had two classes of employees. What were these classes? [ ] 1. Gentleman  2. Laborers

Words to know.

A. Puget Sound Agricultural Company  E. French-Canadian
B. Crops and animals  F. Outfits
C. Prairies  G. Beaver
D. Métis  H. Forests

1. The children of a European/Native American marriage were called this? [ ] D

2. The name for the cargoes of manufactured goods that arrived by ship from England? [ ] F

3. When Fort Nisqually was in operation, much of the southern Puget Sound region was made up of this kind of geography. [ ] C

4. By the 1850s, Fort Nisqually was headquarters for this branch of the Hudson’s Bay Company. [ ] A

5. These men were often master canoe paddlers and skilled tradesmen for the Hudson’s Bay Company. [ ] E

6. What did the Puget Sound Agricultural Company produce? [ ] B
Inside the buildings are many objects that would have been at Fort Nisqually in the 1850s. Identify the following objects.

1. Tobacco Twist
2. Ox Yoke
3. Trap
4. Trade gun lock
5. Blacksmith anvil
6. Jew’s, Mouth, or Jaw harp

Word Search

1. Hudson’s Bay Co. – British company that built Fort Nisqually.
2. Trapper – traded animal skins at Fort Nisqually.
3. Fur Trade – why Fort Nisqually was built.
4. Bastion – the corner towers at Fort Nisqually.
5. Forge – what a blacksmith uses to heat metal.
7. Beaver – its fur was made into hats.
8. Fort – a stockaded trading post.
9. Dr. Tollie – the boss at Fort Nisqually.