



Twin a Fort: studies in culture

Character Education

- Explore the basic needs of human nature with an emphasis on safety and security
- Develop the capacity to see parallels and underlying patterns
- Strengthen the understanding of universal values that underpin diversity

Facts

- A fort was a protected, self contained community designed to survive siege. Barracks, storehouses, kitchens and repair shops were built to be strongholds within the fort
- The French and English established a network of rival forts in Ontario in the 1600s and 1700s to secure trade with First Nations groups. Many forts were re-tooled for the War of 1812
- During the War of 1812 more than 30 defensive structures stretched from Gananoque on the east to Windsor on the west and from Fort Erie in the south as far north as Sault Ste. Marie

Before the Activity

- How is a home like a fort? Make the answer to this question competitive. Which group can list and explain the most parallels?
- Look up Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. Where does a home fit into this hierarchy? How does your home do in fulfilling your basic needs?
- Why are there forts in just about any culture – from Fort George in Jamaica, to the Red Fort in India, Dunadd Hill Fort in Scotland and Fort Bard in Italy? What do forts provide that make them common in any culture?

Activity

- Connecting to the past is difficult. This activity will connect your OWN HERITAGE to the War of 1812 – hopefully in the vicinity of the community in which you



Rock of Gibraltar

Rock of Gibraltar

The Rock of Gibraltar, with its commanding presence rising 426 meters out of the narrow straits that separate the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, has always been a strategic prize. It controlled entrance to the Mediterranean and acted as a stepping stone between Europe and Africa. Occupation of the Rock was hotly contested back even to ancient times. Berber Chieftain Ariq ibn-Ziyad, Governor of Tangier, decided to fortify the Rock when he took possession around AD 711. The walls ibn-Ziyad constructed enclosed a large area and reached from the upper part of the Rock right down to the sea. Strife over the Rock continued and in 1068 the ruling Arab Governor ordered the building of a fort—from that time onwards, the changes to fortifications were the result of the pressing needs of the day. Over the years of their possession the British dug 54.71 kilometers of

now live. When you explore people of the past in your culture and your community you'll be able to share your culture and also see the historic roots of your community. Dig into the TWIN-A-FORT activity.

- From the list of Ontario forts below, select the one closest to your community. With permission from your teacher you might select one from a community in which you previously lived or in which your family has roots

Research your chosen Ontario fort using the following template:

- WHY was the fort built? What needs did it fulfil?
- WHERE was the fort built? Were there strategic reasons for the location?
- WHO built the fort, and not just the nation but the workers too? For example, the Coloured Corps supplied the work power for the building of Fort Mississauga
- WHAT special features does this fort have?
- HOW was the fort used during the War of 1812 or just after that war?

Decide on your cultural heritage to research, one that takes you out of Ontario. For some of you it may take a few generations to get outside Ontario. Using the same template as above, fill in the information that parallels the Ontario fort

- WHY was the fort built? What needs did it fulfill?
- WHERE was the fort built? Were there strategic reasons for the location?
- WHO built the fort—nation, group and workers? For example, the base of Lahore Fort in Pakistan goes back to the Mogul Emperor Akbar the Great
- WHAT special features does this fort have?
- HOW was the fort used during the period of the War of 1812-14 or just after that war? If the fort of your heritage is newer than 1812, explain its best known uses

Create a collage of images and words paralleling the two forts you researched. Present your collage to your classmates

Use the KNOW, LEARNED and NEED TO KNOW (KLN) Chart while the presentations are going on

After the Activity

- Select one KNEED TO KNOW from among your charts to research. Present your new facts at a class round table

tunnels as cover for gun emplacements and built an air strip for WWII. Around the time of the War of 1812 when Spain and Britain were allies, the fortifications of the Rock ensured the flow of trade needed to supply the war against Napoleon continued. To this day, ownership of this small piece of real estate leads to debate about ownership. What is undisputable is that the Rock continues to be a fantastic naval and air staging location.

- What does the TWIN A FORT activity tell you that you all have in common?
- Write an anonymous note to one of the presenters thanking her/him for what you learned about the War of 1812 and his/her culture. These anonymous notes should be checked first by the teacher

Extensions

- For **art** – Create a model of one of your forts
- For **drama** – using 10 tableaux (frozen pictures) tell the story of something that happened at your 1812 fort. A narrator may be used to describe the ten scenes. You might also use a sound effects team
- For **music** – Strains of 1812–1815. Research songs played during the war and learn to play/sing a few bars. Gather as an orchestra. Have a conductor point to the various snippets. Rehearse and record the best sound collage for your composition “Strains of 1812”

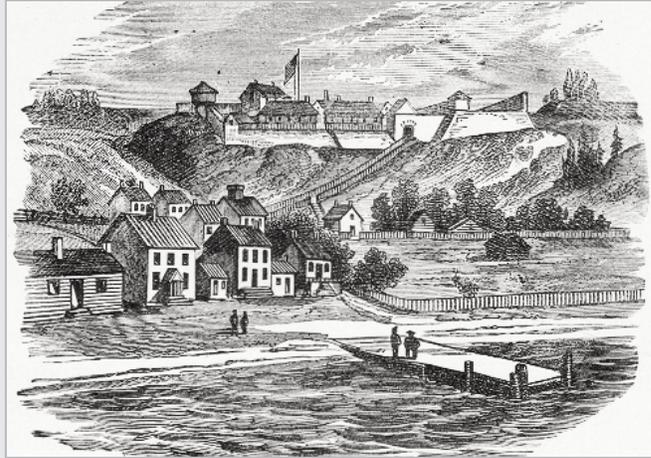
Forts were hubs for communication, trade, services, socializing and safety of person. Compare your home and your 1812 fort for these characteristics

List of Ontario Forts and Fortifications

Burlington Heights Depot
Butler's Barracks, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Fort Amherstburg, Amherstburg
Fort Chippawa, Chippawa
Fort Erie, Fort Erie
Fort Frederick, Kingston
Fort Frontenac, Kingston
Fort George, Fort George
Fort Henry, Kingston
Fort Hope, Windsor
Fort Kente, Carrying Place
Fort Mackinac, now in Michigan, near Sault Ste. Marie
Fort Malden, Amherstburg

Fort Mackinac – Gibraltar of the North

Mackinac Island was a highly strategic location during the history of early North America. Overlooking the straits between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron it controlled the fur trade of the Great Lakes. Before the American Revolutionary War, the French had located Fort Michilimackinac on the mainland but in 1779–81 British Commandant Patrick Sinclair constructed a new fort on the 46 meter limestone bluffs of Mackinac Island—finding it to be a more strategic position. The fort had a 3 meter high stockade of cedar pickets topped with iron prongs. The construction crew reassembled buildings from Fort Michilimackinac inside the stockade and constructed interior buildings with up to three meter thick stone walls. The many cisterns were set up to enable the self-contained fort to resist a long siege. Even after the Revolutionary War ended and *Jay's Treaty*, awarded the Americans the island, the British didn't give up their great fort until 1796. Giving up such a strong location to the Americans was hard. Then, thanks to the cross-border fur trading interests of John Jacob Astor, the British/Canadian side knew about the start of the War of 1812 before the Americans at Mackinac. The surprise attack*, the first land battle of the war, led to Fort Mackinac being back in British hands until the end of the war. Unfortunately, the *Treaty of Ghent* awarded it to the U.S. Like the Rock of Gibraltar, as a strategic location Mackinac was highly desirable. However, before that final hand-over to the U.S. in 1815, with the British back in control in 1812, they garrisoned the fort, built a new defensive fortification on the highest point of the island and suc-



Fort Michilimackinac Michigan, USA. formerly Upper Canada (Ontario)

cessfully fended off another American attack in 1814—thanks in no small part to the recruiting efforts of locals such as Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchell. The British garrison during the 1814 defence included 136 Royal Newfoundland Fencibles, a dozen men from the British 10th Royal Veteran Battalion, 13 artilleryists, 37 Michigan Fencibles**, 100 militia from St Joseph's Island and 360 First Nations allies. Although Newfoundland was not yet a part of Canada, if you count them in, over 700 of the soldiers securing the victory on Mackinac Island were Canadians. Had Canadians not taken Fort Mackinac in 1812 and held it in 1814, who knows what Canada might look like today?

*The British attack was led by Captain Charles Roberts who had 45 British Regulars (10th Royal Veterans) and help from the North West Company which provided 180 Canadian and Métis employees, and the schooner Caledonia. Additionally he had First Nations recruits: 300 Ojibwa and Odawa (Ottawa) and 110 Sioux, Menominee and Winnebago

**A small unit of men raised at Fort Mackinac in 1813

Fort Mississauga, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Fort St. Joseph, St. Joseph Island
Fort Wellington, Prescott
Fort William, Thunder Bay
Fort York and New Fort York, Toronto
Fort Willow, Springwater
Bridge Island Blockhouse, near Mallorytown Landing
Cornwall Blockhouse, Cornwall near French Point
Gananoque Blockhouse, Gananoque
Kingston Blockhouses
Missisagua Point Battery, Kingston
Point Iroquois Blockhouses, near Iroquois
Raisin River Blockhouse, Lancaster
Sault Ste Marie Posts, Sault Ste. Marie
Wasaga Blockhouse, Wasaga Beach

Sources

"History: Gibraltar", Government of Gibraltar Information Services, <http://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/history>
Jones, Rachel, *Stacking the Deck: Indian Involvement in the Fight for Control of Fort Mackinac During the War of 1812*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, 2007
Kelton, Dwight, *Annals of Fort Mackinac*, Detroit: Detroit Free Press Co, 1883, <http://archive.org/details/annal-soffortmack00keltuoft>
Payette, Pete, "Canadian Forts", Ontario, www.northamericanforts.com/Canada/on.html



NAME

DATE

KWL Chart

Before you begin your research on the fort you select, list details in the first two columns. Fill in the last column after completing your research.

TOPIC

K

What I know

W

What I want to know

L

What I learned

NAME _____

Information on _____ Fort

| • WHY was the fort built? What needs did it fulfil? | • WHERE was the fort built? Were there strategic reasons for the location? | • WHO built the fort, and not just the nation but the workers too? | • WHAT special features does this fort have? | • HOW was the fort used during the War of 1812 or just after that war? |
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