

# Artifacts in the NPS Museum Collections

## Artifacts of the Fur Trade

Archeologists have found many items from the Fur Trade in America that started with the first European contact in the 1500s until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several National parks have collections of artifacts and objects from this era, including Grand Portage in Minnesota and Bent's Old Fort in Colorado.



North America was rich in animals, and demand for fur in Europe was high. Native Americans and traders participated in trading animal furs for things like copper kettles, axes, and beads.



Let's find  
some artifacts!

- 🍷 There were many bead colors but only a few were popular for trade among the Native Americans. Can you find a possible trade bead? How many colors of beads can you find in the web collections?
- 🍷 Find an example of an iron axe with part of its handle that would have been traded to Natives by Europeans for fur. What park is it from? What state is this park in? Why do you think the handle lasted so long in the ground?
- 🍷 Because beaver hats were very popular, beavers were nearly hunted to extinction by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Can you find a pelt from a beaver that has been dressed and prepared for trade or sale?



BONUS: Can you find a former US President's hat that was made from a beaver?

