



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DIGITAL FUR TRADE STORIES PROJECT GETS GREEN LIGHT FOR FALL LAUNCH

(WINNIPEG, Thursday, April 21th, 2005) – **Canada's National History Society** today unveiled plans for its first online social studies/history teaching resource unit called "Fur Trade Stories." The announcement was made inside the Hudson Bay Gallery of the Manitoba Museum this morning.

The digital content initiative, in development for the past year marks the first time that the three Hbc History Foundation beneficiaries—**Canada's National History Society**, the **Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba** and **The Manitoba Museum**—collaborate on a project. Today's announcement also confirmed funding for the project from the **Winnipeg Foundation**, (\$30,000) and the **Province of Manitoba, through the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth** (\$30,000.)

"By bringing these resources to a digital, web-based medium it guarantees free access to one of the most significant Fur Trade collections in the world—it will benefit our students throughout Manitoba who study this part of our history at several different points in their school curricula. By providing them with a fresh new approach, using authentic materials in a totally modern way, we know that students will be more engaged in the discovery of our history" stated **Peter Bjornson, Minister of Education**.

"Like the province, **The Winnipeg Foundation** is pleased to be a partner in this historic, online project. It is important Manitoba's rich history remains an integral part of school curriculum. This project will ensure students can access the Fur Trade Stories directly in their classrooms," said **Rick Lussier, Director of Community Grants** for the Foundation, at the announcement.

"The HBC contribution to the evolution of the fur trade industry is an important segment that complements the educational curricula in every jurisdiction. Frequently we hear from teachers that devising creative and engaging lesson plans is not a problem for them. Their challenge is to gather relevant primary source documents, and to acquire the rights and permissions to copy and use them in a classroom setting. Our use of researched articles, primary documents and artifacts will provide them with quality content, in an accessible web-based format, delivered at the student's pace," added **Deborah Morrison, president and CEO of the History Society**.

The bilingual resource will feature more than 200 artifacts and documents drawn from the collections of the Manitoba Archives and Manitoba Museum. It will also provide a digital record for fur trade stories recounted in ***The Beaver: Canada's History Magazine*** published by the History Society. The 85-year old publication began as a company newsletter for the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg and remains today one of the richest popular accounts of early fur trade explorations in the world.

The completed resource unit is scheduled to be launched at the 4th Biennial National History Conference to be held in Edmonton, October 28-30th, 2005

The History Society has brought together several sources of support to help bring the project online. The **Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba and The Manitoba Museum** are the core partners in the project providing invaluable reference and research skills, interpretive advice and support, and preparing their documents for digitization. **Parks Canada** and Manitoba's **Department of Education, Citizenship, and Youth** has provided curriculum and educational guidance for the structure and development of the site. **CN Rail** was the first corporate contributor, generously providing \$10,000 through its *Community Investment Program*. Total project costs are budgeted at \$180,000 including cash and in-kind investments from the participating partners.

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About Canada's National History Society

Based in Winnipeg, Canada's National History Society is a charitable organization devoted to popularizing Canadian history through its publishing and award recognition programs. In addition to publishing *The Beaver* magazine, celebrating its 85th Anniversary of publication this year, History Society activities include the Pierre Berton Award, and the Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

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