

Lesson Plan: Upper Fort Garry Commemorative Plaques Grade 11 Canadian History

Essential Question

How do public representations of the past reveal the prevailing attitudes of the times in which they were made?

Enduring Understandings

- Canada's self-image as a bilingual, multicultural nation has not always existed; it has evolved over the past century and a half.
- History is as much about the details we *neglect* to commemorate as it is about the details we commemorate.

Historical Thinking Concepts and Skills

Analysis of primary sources

Inferring prevailing societal attitudes from public representations of the past.

Historical Content Focus

The evolution of Canada's relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples after Confederation

The evolution of French-English relations in Canada

Student Tasks to Demonstrate Learning

Students answer analysis questions.

Students present their findings in groups.

Students discuss and debate their analyses of primary sources.

Learning and Assessment Strategies

Activate

At the Upper Fort Garry site, teacher and students gather around the five plaques commemorating the site, erected over the last hundred years.

Teacher explains

- that the site represents an important crossroad (or, more precisely, series of crossroads) in Manitoban and Canadian history
- that public officials and authorities have, over the course of the last century, attempted to explain and commemorate the importance of the events and personalities that are associated with the Fort

- that their task, over the following 20 minutes, is to analyze these commemorative plaques to find out what they reveal, and what they hide, about Manitoba's and Canada's history
- that, in order to understand how the past is seen through the lens of the present, it will be useful to build a list of how we view ourselves today, with a brainstorm.

Students are asked to collectively come up with 5-10 ways in which Canada -- Canadian society, Canadian people, Canadian values and characteristics -- can be described, using adjectives or nouns. Words that could typically be offered include:

- multicultural • inclusive • cold
- bilingual • large • anti-American
- First Nations • peaceful
- tolerant • or even...
- polite • racist

Students are asked to keep these words in mind when analyzing their one assigned plaque.

Teacher divides students into five groups, each provided with one task sheet, on which the following tasks are outlined:

- Read their assigned plaque attentively
- Answer the analysis questions provided
- Ensure each member of the group can explain at least one of the group's findings

Acquire

Students in each group read their assigned plaque attentively and summarize its content in their own words

Students answer questions that seek to analyze the plaque's content and design

The analysis questions, specific to each plaque, are shown in Learning Resources

The teacher will circulate among each group, helping where needed. Students may need prompting to discern what stories are NOT told on each plaque and how the plaque would appear differently, had it been produced in contemporary times

Apply

Students return from their five groups in order to share their analyses. Each student from each group in turn briefly shares one observation gleaned during their group's observations.

After each group presents, teacher poses questions to the larger group which prompt them to discuss and debate what aspects related to the DESIGN and the CONTENT of each plaque would be considered inappropriate, incomplete or inaccurate by today's accepted views of Canadian history.

Learning Resources (following pages)

A. "Fort Garry" Canadian Club of Winnipeg, erected in 1909

B. "Gateway: Forts" Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, erected ca.1927

- C. “Ambroise-Didyme Lépine:” Province of Manitoba historical plaque, erected in 1970s [see Appendix for French version]
- D. “Fort Garry - Fort Edmonton Trail” Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, written ca. 1960s/70s, erected ca. 1970s
- E. Two detailed historical panels: tri-level government program “Agreement on Recreation and Conservation (ARC) early 1980s
- F. “The history of historical plaques at Upper Fort Garry” [panel written by Friends of Upper Fort Garry, 2015: English and French]
- G. Analysis of the commemorative plaques

A. “Fort Garry” (chronology; unilingual, English)



Comprehension & Analysis questions:

1. This plaque presents a list of dates and events; what is the technical (historiographic) one-word term for such a list?

Answer: Chronology

2. List at least three questions that the details shown prompt you to wonder about. In other words, what answers does the plaque NOT provide? For each, justify why this is an important or valid question. Examples could include:

How was Fort Gibraltar destroyed? The statement appears to be in bold, and “destroyed” is a dramatic word, which begs the question “how did this happen?” and “why?”

- List at least two details that you find curious (for example, details you consider unnecessary, trivial, curious, puzzling, etc) Examples could include:

Why include the precise length of the walls?

- What was (or is) the Canadian Club of Winnipeg? Is it a branch of the government?
- Use at least one of the words from the brainstormed list of Canadian modern-day characteristics the class came up with earlier to show that this word does or does not apply to this plaque

Example could include:

“bilingual”; the plaque is written in English only

“Inclusive”; the plaque does not mention persons or groups but only companies

When the group shares their answers to this last question in particular, the Teacher could point out that the Canadian Club is not a branch of government but a group of entrepreneurs who promote free enterprise

B. Gateway Plaque (quasi bilingual)

Comprehension & Analysis Questions

- What group (specifically and generally), created and installed this plaque?
- What pictorial elements can you describe in the decorative border surrounding the plaque? Why do you suppose they were included? Comment on at least two of them.
- In modern word-processing formatting, the use of a colon (“:”) is followed by a list, filled with elements formatted in a uniform pattern. What, in the “list” which follows the colon on this plaque is uniform; what is not? In other words, what details are found in some of the points listed but omitted from others?

Examples could include:

Fort Rouge is described as being “under” LaVérendrye, but those in charge of subsequent forts are not named



Construction material of Upper Fort Garry is cited as being of stone, but there is no mention of the building materials used for the other forts.

2. Questions for Immersion française students or English academic students with guidance:

- a. Can you spot the fort whose name is not translated? How would you translate it? Why do you suppose the name is not translated on the plaque?
- b. Can you spot the archaic (or erroneous) spelling of an adjective used to describe “Upper Fort Garry”?

Answer: “aggrandy”

- c. What parts of the plaque notably lacks translation in French (apart from the fort described in question ‘a’)? What hidden messages can you surmise from this lack?

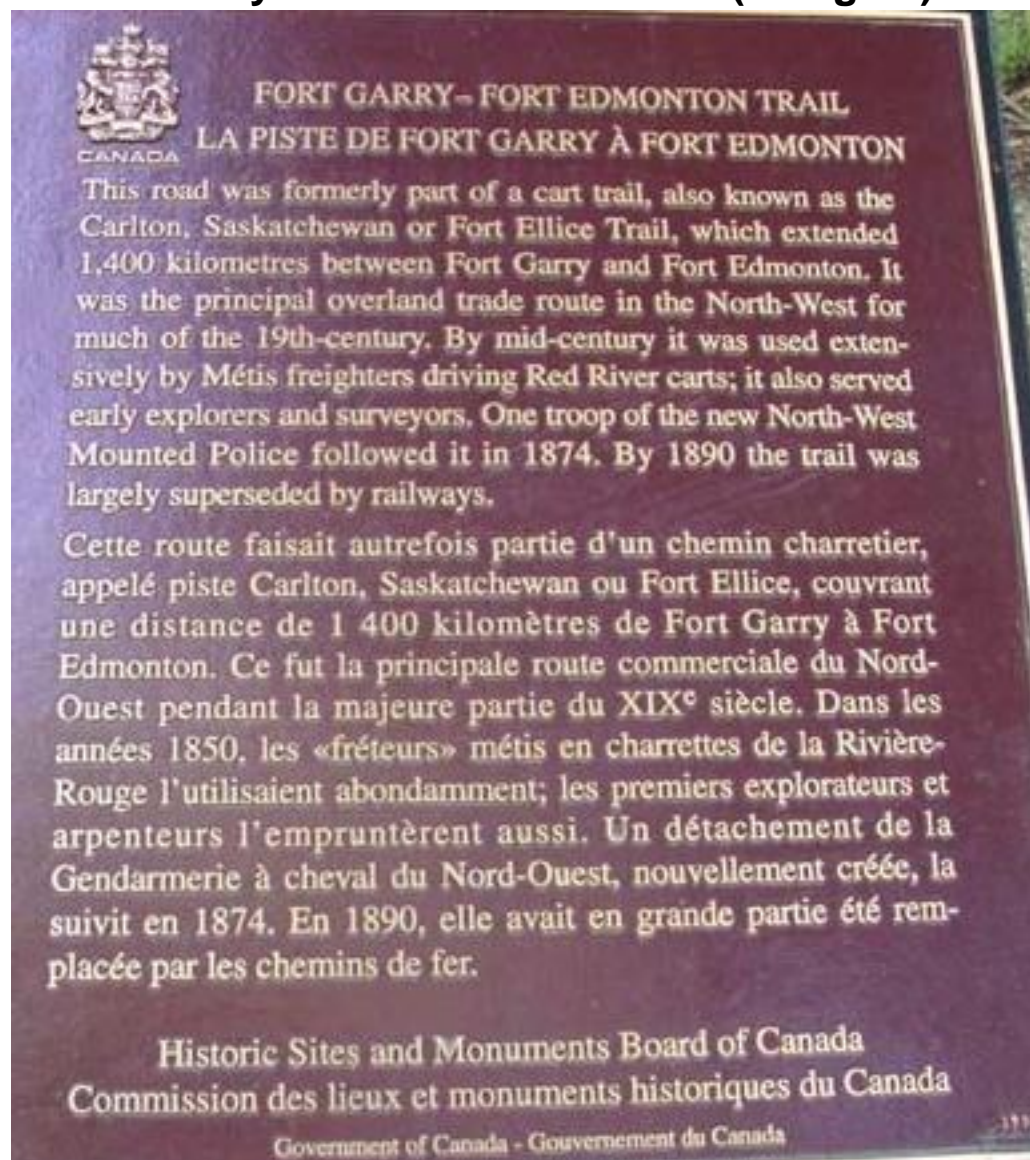
C. Commemorative plaque: Ambroise-Didyme Lépine (bilingual – French text at bottom of document)



Comprehension & Analysis Questions

1. What organization created and installed this plaque?
2. What was Winnipeg called, in 1840, before it was incorporated as a city?
3. What name is given to the events involving Lépine and Riel in the year 1869?
4. What other names do you know that are used to describe these events?
5. What does this choice of wording reveal about the Historic Sites Advisory Board's view of the events of 1869?
6. "*The sentence was subsequently commuted... and forfeiture of political rights.*" This sentence construction is known grammatically as "passive voice"; what effect(s) does this have on those who read this detail on the plaque.

D. Fort Garry - Fort Edmonton Trail (bilingual)



Comprehension and Analysis Questions

1. What organization created and installed this plaque? In what year?
2. Surmise: what present day road is being referenced in the first line of the plaque? Can you identify the present day highway that links Winnipeg to Edmonton at a point west of Portage-La-Prairie?
3. Identify the term used in the French translation that is a regionalism -- i.e. not normally used in international French. What grammatical markings signal that this word is not "pure French"?

E. Upper Fort Garry Gate (bilingual) ARC program (tri-level government 1980s)



[Text not available at this time]

F. “The history of historical plaques at Upper Fort Garry” [panel written by Friends of Upper Fort Garry, 2015] English and French

The nearby plaques and panels speak to citizen interest in Upper Fort Garry as an historic place. Its commemoration began in 1909 after local people saved the Gate as a monument to the fur trade. In the 1920s the Canadian government’s Historic Sites and Monuments Board chose to emphasize the European presence here without mentioning Indigenous peoples; the Board added another plaque in the 1970s implying that movements of people and trade from Red River westward on the Edmonton trail provided an economic basis for political unity in northern North America. In the same decade the provincial government risked controversy by recognizing a Métis community leader. And in the 1980s a tri-government agency restored the Gate, mapped the forts of the region, and recalled Red River’s most famous political moment. These carefully-planned statements illustrate that perceptions of history change over time and that significant differences of interpretation may have their origin in writers’ distinctive vantage points.

Les plaques et panneaux à proximité expriment l’intérêt des citoyens pour le site historique d’Upper Fort Garry. La commémoration du site débute en 1909 lorsque la population locale sauvegarde la porte du fort pour célébrer le commerce des fourrures. Dans les années 1920, la Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada du gouvernement fédéral choisit de mettre l’accent sur la présence européenne sans mentionner les peuples autochtones. Dans les

années 1970, elle ajoute une plaque qui suppose que le mouvement des personnes et du commerce de la rivière Rouge vers l'ouest sur la piste d'Edmonton a créé une base économique à l'unité politique dans le nord de l'Amérique du Nord. Au cours de la même décennie, le gouvernement provincial risque la controverse en reconnaissant un dirigeant communautaire métis. Dans les années 1980, un organisme gouvernemental tripartite restaure la porte du fort, cartographie les forts de la région et rappelle l'événement politique le plus célèbre de la Colonie de la Rivière-Rouge. Ces énoncés planifiés soigneusement illustrent que les perceptions historiques changent avec le temps et que des différences d'interprétation importantes peuvent émaner du point de vue particulier de chaque auteur.

G. Analysis of the commemorative plaques

Students re-group to share and present their findings:

- ◆ first describing their plaque,
- ◆ then sharing their answers to analysis questions (or a highlighted “best question and answer” as time permits)

Following the presentations, the teacher can then recall to the group some of the adjectives raised in the initial brainstorming session (i.e. contemporary perceptions of Canadian society) in order to prompt students to compare and contrast these modern perceptions with the words shown on the plaques and the perceptions they evoke.

Appendix: Ambroise-Didyme Lépine Province of Manitoba historical plaque, erected in 1970s

Ambroise-Didyme Lépine

1840 – 1923

Born in the Red River Settlement, Ambroise-Didyme Lépine engaged in river-lot agriculture, combining this with hunting and trading as did many other Métis. In the autumn of 1869 he became Adjutant General to Louis Riel and played a prominent role in the Red River Resistance.

Lépine was a member of Riel's Provisional Government, and presided over the court martial which condemned prisoner Thomas Scott to be shot on 4 March 1870. Here, before the wall of Fort Garry, Scott was executed. Lépine was arrested, tried, and was to be hanged on 29 January 1875. The sentence was subsequently commuted to two years imprisonment and forfeiture of political rights. Although he remained sympathetic

to the Métis cause, Lépine withdrew from active public life. His dictated recollections contributed to the publication of a history of the Métis people.

Ambroise-Didyme Lépine

1840 – 1923

Ambroise-Didyme Lépine naquit dans la colonie de la rivière Rouge. Comme bien d'autres métis, il vivait d'agriculture riveraine, de chasse et de traite des fourrures. Il joua un rôle important dans la rébellion des métis organisée par Louis Riel dont il devint adjudant-major au cours de l'automne 1869.

Comme member du gouvernement provisoire de Riel, il présida la cour martiale qui condamna le prisonnier Thomas Scott à être fusillé le 4 mars 1870. C'est ici même, contre un mur du Fort Garry, qu'eut lieu l'exécution. Lépine fut arrêté, jugé, et devait être pendu le 29 janvier 1875. Mais sa peine fut commuée en deux ans de prison avec perte des droits politiques. Il se retira alors de la vie publique mais demeura attaché à la cause des métis. Il dicta des mémoires qui parurent dans une histoire des métis.