

Intermediate Learning Activity 1: Historical Significance

What did the War of 1812 reveal about the historical importance of Fort Point and Trinity?

Course Links: Intermediate Social Studies (In Newfoundland and Labrador, Grade 8 History and Grade 9 Social Studies.)

Outcomes addressed:

Grade 8 History

SCO 1.1 The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of history:

1.1.1 Identify historical sources in their own community.

1.1.7 Infer an historical condition (e.g., economic role, social more, lifestyle, living conditions) from an historical source.

SCO 1.2: The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how to find out about the past:

1.2.3 Formulate a key question that is supported by a given source.

1.2.4 Identify other sources that relate to the key question.

1.2.5 Gather information that is significant for the question.

Grade 9 Social Studies

SCO i.0 – The student will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in utilizing concepts and processes from the social sciences

i.1 Use an inquiry model to explore and resolve significant questions

i.2 Apply intellectual tools to analyze events, ideas, issues, patterns and trends

i.3 Make reasoned assessments based on appropriate criteria

Learning Goal and Description

Goal: To examine aspects of Trinity and Fort Point within the colony of Newfoundland that made the place significant, economically and militarily, for the British and a place of interest to other countries during the 1800s.

Brief Description: Students will examine the economic activity out of Trinity Harbour, as well as the geographical features of Trinity and Fort Point, in order to understand why the Newfoundland Governor and the British would want the area fortified during the War of 1812.

Planning and Preparation

Sources and references will include

1. Brief overview of War of 1812. (*See opening page of this website.*)
2. Primary and secondary sources that indicate the strategic and economic importance of Trinity
 - a) Reasons for fortifying Trinity between 1700 and 1760 (See letters to Lords in England – to Earl of Nottingham, 1701(THS virtual Gallery, image 19) and Letter requesting the fortification of Trinity, 1702 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 20)
 - b) For an overview of how the fishery influenced Newfoundland and

Labrador from the mid-1700s to the late 1800s, teachers and students may examine the following sources from the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Website:

Economic Changes, 1730-1815

http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/economic_changes_1815.html

The Decline of the Migratory Fishery

<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/decline.html>

3. *Google Earth* or maps of the North Atlantic and Newfoundland
4. Maps and diagrams of Trinity Harbour and Fort Point from the Trinity Historical Society's (THS) Virtual Gallery: #s 31, 29, 25, and 11

Preparations will include:

1. Classroom access to *Google Earth* or maps of the globe
2. Access to (and preferably the ability to project enlargements of) images for from the THS virtual gallery
3. Student access to **Organizer #1** for recording their observations about the features Trinity Harbour (which will be placed in their Portfolio).

Strategies for Completion

Activation: (20 to 30 minute brainstorming, instructional session.)

Teachers may begin with the question: *Where did the War of 1812 take place and what countries were involved?* It should take no more than five minutes to provide a very brief overview of the War.

Teachers may ask students how they could investigate the features of a bay or harbour in Canada. What sources might they use? What technology is available to assist them in their study? These questions should stimulate students' thinking about the tools or sources for such investigations.

Teachers may move to an explanation of the purpose of this Activity: to examine aspects of Trinity Harbour and its history prior to 1812, which made the protection of the location important during the War of 1812. Teachers may use the quote from Sir Richard Whitbourne in 1620, when he wrote that Trinity was ".....the best and largest harbour in all the Land." Teachers may use either *Google Earth* or maps of the North Atlantic and the island of Newfoundland to engage students in a preliminary look at the physical features of Trinity. Students will record notes about the features of Trinity Harbour using **Organizer #1**.

Teachers may then use the Trinity Historical Society's website to demonstrate the many sources of information available about this historical period. Teachers may explain that students will undertake a more detailed investigation of primary and secondary sources in subsequent learning activities. At this point, the objective is to learn where to find the sources and to briefly review three sources that explain the features and value of Trinity Harbour. Teachers may use the Letter to the Earl of Nottingham, 1701, the Letter to the Lordships of England, 1702, and the Plan for Admiral's Point, 1746 as examples of sources containing evidence about why Admiral's Point became a Fort (see *Summary Notes for the Teacher*). Teachers may

highlight two points that students will confirm as they examine primary sources:

- By the early 1700s, merchants in Trinity exported 30 to 40 percent of the cod, oil and seal produced in Newfoundland and had a summer population of approximately 2,000 (see THS Gallery Images 11 & 21, text attachments).
- By the early 1800s, Trinity had one of the most well-established resident populations outside of St. John's (see THS Gallery Image 13, text attachment).

Teachers may then engage students in their own investigations under the **Connection** section.

Connection: (30 to 40 minute group activity followed by a sharing session.)

Students may work in small groups to examine secondary sources. Teachers will provide one Organizer (either #2 or #3) to each group.

- **Organizer #2:** Warfare and the Economy
- **Organizer #3:** War and the Decline of the Migratory Fishery

At the end of the activity, teachers will collect the completed sheets from each group to assess them and then post them on the classroom wall or on a school or classroom website for student reference during subsequent learning activities.

Consolidation: (Students will complete this activity independently.)

Students may choose **one** of the following options to demonstrate their understanding of why Trinity was important economically and militarily to the British:

- A letter to the Governor of Newfoundland, written in 1812 arguing the case for developing Trinity as the main military Fort outside of St. John's.
- A letter from an American spy – who is working in Trinity in 1812 – to his superior in Washington, explaining why the United States should use Trinity as their base of operations as they take control of Newfoundland.
- A letter to the Federal Minister responsible for the Department of National Defence (DND), presenting arguments why Trinity Harbour should become the main base for Canada's submarine fleet.

Extension: (Optional.)

Sometime after they have examined more primary and secondary sources related to Fort Point, students may take a field trip to the site. Teachers will need to organize a half day visit in order that students have adequate time to tour the various components of the Fort and examine the information at the Visitor's Centre.

Assessment and Evaluation

For this learning activity, teachers should

- Check to ensure students completed **Organizers 1-3** (assess level of detail).
- Use a simple point system rubric (addressing skills/strategies and quality of content) to measure the degree of detail in students' chosen response under **Consolidation** (look for evidence students use to support their argument).
- Provide feedback to encourage students to undertake detailed analysis of information sources.

ORGANIZER #1: ".....the best and largest harbour in all the Land."

Directions: Use the information gathered from *Google Earth* (or maps) and the information in primary sources cited by the teacher to complete this sheet.

Analysis Sheet: Trinity and Trinity Harbour	
Considerations	Observations
Size and Shape of the Harbour	
Location and shape of Fort Point	
Location and size of Harbour Entrance	
Surroundings (e.g., mountains for shelter and protection; land for commercial and agricultural use)	
Other	

Organizer #2: Warfare and the Economy

Note: Read only the section of the article as indicated at the left.

Focus for Inquiry	Notes
<p>Importance of the Newfoundland Fishery between 1775 and 1815</p> <p>Students may examine the section entitled “Warfare and the Economy” in the following source: -Economic Changes, 1730-1815 http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/economic_changes_1815.html</p>	<p><i>What wars were fought between 1775 and 1815?</i></p>
	<p><i>How did these wars change the Newfoundland fishery and Newfoundland settlement?</i></p>
	<p><i>What particular changes in the fishery occurred during the Napoleonic Wars and the period of the War of 1812?</i></p>
	<p><i>How does this information help explain the importance of Trinity and Fort Point during this period?</i></p>

Organizer #3: War and the Decline of the Migratory Fishery

Note: Read only the section of the article as indicated at the left.

Focus for Inquiry	Notes
<p>Importance of the Newfoundland Fishery between 1775 and 1815</p> <p>Students may examine the last three (3) paragraphs of the following source: -The Decline of the Migratory Fishery http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/decline.html</p>	<p><i>What did Napoleon (the French) do in 1806 that affected international trade?</i></p>
	<p><i>What did the British and the United States do in response?</i></p>
	<p><i>What affect did this have on the Newfoundland fishery?</i></p>
	<p><i>How does this information help explain the importance of Trinity and Fort Point during this period?</i></p>

Summary Notes for Teacher

Letter to Earl of Nottingham, June 1, 1701

- Clarifies that the merchants and traders to Newfoundland are requesting the fortification of Trinity in order to protect fishing interests in Trinity Bay and along the Northeast Coast as far as Greenspond.
- Other arguments provided include
 - work already supported by the King for the fortification of St. John's.
 - reference to the French bringing materials to build a fortification at Chapeau Rouge (further along the Northeast Coast).

Letter to Lordships Requesting Fortification of Trinity, 1702

- This letter summarizes the initial requirements for the fortification of Trinity:
 - 20 sakers (medium size cannons), to be placed on Admiral's Point
 - Carriages, powder, cannon balls, and other materials to mount and arm the cannons
 - Nails and spikes to build a platform
 - 100 small arms (guns) for the inhabitants
 - An officer and a few soldiers to train the inhabitants and to command them during any attacks
- The letter references work on the Fort already underway.
- The letter also provides the following arguments:
 - The fortification will protect the ships engaged in the fishery in this part of Newfoundland
 - The fortification will exceed any other to date in Newfoundland
 - The harbour will provide a safe "haven" for up to 1000 British ships

Plan of the Admiral's Point, Trinity Harbour, 1746 (THS Gallery, Image 24)

- This straightforward Plan shows clearly the placement of the original gun batteries, the location of the storehouse and powder magazine, the barracks, and the main landing area.