

Learning Activity 2: Examining Evidence

How do we know what we know about Fort Point, Trinity?

Course Link: Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 2205

Outcome addressed:

SCO 2.0 - The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of economic, political and social issues related to Newfoundland and Labrador, both past and present.

SCO 4.0 - The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the peopling of Newfoundland and Labrador to the mid-1700s.

SCO 5.0 - The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how the fishery influenced Newfoundland and Labrador from the mid-1700s to the late 1800s.

Learning Goal and Description

Goal: To examine information from several primary sources and decide: what was the actual story?

Brief Description: This learning activity focuses primarily on the interpretation of primary sources to piece together what happened. Students will examine

- a) Artifacts from the period (e.g., maps, charts, paintings, correspondence, diaries)
- b) Artifacts and information gathered from Archaeological digs

They will use these sources to build the story of what happened and when. In doing this, students will consistently address the question: How reliable are the sources?

Planning and Preparation

Sources and references will include primary evidence covering two particular periods in the development of Fort Point, Trinity (**Note:** all sources are available virtually, in one place, through the Trinity Historical Society's Website under Legacy of Fort Point)

1. 1700–1762

The artifacts students may examine from this period include:

- a. Petition to Right Honourable the Earl of Nottingham, June 1, 1701 (THS virtual Gallery, image 19)
- b. Letter requesting the fortification of Trinity, May 28, 1702 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 20)
- c. Plan of the Admiral's Point, Trinity Harbour, 1746 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 24)
- d. Plan of Admiral's Point, 1748 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 25)
- e. State and Condition of Admiral's (Fort) Point, 1748 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 27)
- f. Report from Fort Point in 1749 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 26)
- g. Plan of Admiral's (Fort) Point, 1762 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 29)

- h. Legend for the Plan of Admiral's (Fort) Point, 1762 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 30)
- i. Cartographic Map of Trinity Harbour, 1762 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 31)
- j. Excerpts from Diary of Benjamin Lester, July-August, 1762 (THS virtual Gallery, Images 39-50)
- k. Letter from Chevalier de la Motte, Vauvert, February 22, 1775 (THS virtual Gallery, Images 59-63)

2. 1812–1820

The artifacts students may examine from this period include:

- a. 1812 Engineer's Report on Admiral's Point (THS virtual Gallery, Image 90)
 - b. Copy of a Letter from Surrogate Judge David Buchan on the Subject of Establishing a Code of Signals, 1813 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 91)
 - c. Letter from Surrogate Judge David Buchan to the Magistrate of Trinity District, 1813 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 92)
 - d. Entry from the Trinity District Court Records, 1813 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 93)
 - e. Letter from John Clinch (J.P.) to the two Commandants of the Loyal Trinity Volunteer Rangers, 1813 (THS virtual Gallery, Images 94-95)
3. To consolidate information gathered from the primary sources, students may review the findings of the Archaeological dig at Fort Point in 1969 with follow-up Archaeological work from 1993-1995 (THS virtual Gallery, images 151-163; report by F. Bartovics, December 1970, images 164-171).

Preparations will include:

- This Learning Activity exposes students to a substantial amount of information. It is not necessary for teachers to read and view all the information in advance. Teachers and students can assume an inquiry approach, learn and raise questions together. It is important that teachers they make the materials available (preferably electronically reduce the use of paper).
- In preparation for the Activation lesson, teachers should review the letters of 1701 and 1702, and examine the first Plan for Admiral's Point. (Teachers may refer to the **Summary** attached.)
- In preparation for the Connection and Consolidation lessons, teachers may read Strand 7: Act cooperatively with others to promote mutual interests, page 87, Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 2205, see [http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/socialstudies/NL%20Studies%202205%20CG%20\(August%202010\).pdf](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/socialstudies/NL%20Studies%202205%20CG%20(August%202010).pdf)
- Teachers will guide students to the primary sources available virtually at the Trinity Historical Society Website
- Teachers will ensure students have access to the **Organizers** for this activity.

Strategies for Completion

Activation: *(approximately one class period; 50 minutes to one hour)*

Teachers may begin by asking students to recall, from their previous work in social studies courses, what is the difference between primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources are sources that come *from* the time period being studied.

Secondary sources are any sources that come *after* the time period being studied.

Teachers may ask students to list the types of sources they would expect to find about Fort Point Trinity, and where these sources may be located. Students will likely recall many artifacts displayed at the Trinity Historical Society Website from Learning Activity 1; however, the important objective of this introductory lesson is to have students recognize the variety of evidence available from this period in the history of Trinity.

Teachers may use the visuals and accompanying text from the Trinity Historical Society's Website (images 1, 11-14) to highlight the increasing importance of Trinity as one of Great Britain's main "colonial interests" in North America from 1700 through the mid 1800s. As early as 1579, Sir Richard Whitbourne was promoting Trinity as an excellent harbour from which to engage in the Newfoundland fishery. The first Court of the Admiralty was held in Trinity in 1615. By 1700, Trinity was a strong year-round settlement and the main harbour for many British merchants, particularly from Poole. The rise in importance of Trinity was due to its large protected harbour with abundant land for mercantile premises, its proximity to the main shipping routes to Europe and the Caribbean, and its strategic location as a centre from which to establish fishing posts around Trinity Bay and along the northeast coast.

Next, teachers may guide students to primary sources surrounding the initial plan for a Fort at Admiral's Point. Teachers may lead an examination of the first three artifacts related to the Fort:

- a. Petition to Right Honourable the Earl of Nottingham, June 1, 1701 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 19)
- b. Letter requesting the fortification of Trinity, May 28, 1702 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 20)
- c. Plan of the Admiral's Point, Trinity Harbour, 1746 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 24)

As teachers and students examine the contents of the letters requesting fortification and the plan for the Fort, teachers may point out that Trinity was invaded by the French twice during the Anglo-French Wars, in 1696 and again in 1705. Both times, settlers' dwellings and fishing premises were destroyed.

If there is time remaining in this introductory class, teachers may establish the small groups for the cooperative learning session to that follows.

Connection: *(approximately one class period; 50 minutes to one hour)*

Students may be assigned to groups of four. Teachers may use small group cooperative learning as an efficient means for students to analyze and summarize

large amounts of information. Student groups may be assigned the following tasks (where class sizes permit, more than one group may be assigned the same task):

Group 1: Examine evidence of the original construction of the Fort at Admiral's Point, 1740s and 1750s (**Organizer #2**)

Group 2: Examine evidence of the destruction of the Fort in 1762 (**Organizers #3 and #4**)

Group 3: Examine evidence of the re-establishment of the Fort in 1812-1820 and the correspondence between Judge David Buchan and the magistrates of the District of Trinity, 1813 (**Organizers # 5 and #6**)

Group 4: Examine evidence from the Archaeological dig at Fort Point, 1969 (**Organizer #7**)

Teachers will ensure each group has access to the appropriate artifacts at the beginning of the class. Students will use the Organizers provided to complete their analysis of the artifacts. Teachers will need to provide support to groups as they work with artifacts that were produced three centuries ago.

Consolidation: *(approximately one class period; 50 minutes to one hour)*

Students will be reassigned in new groups of four with one student from each of the four groups from the previous small group session in each new group. This will allow each student to share information analyzed from an examination of primary sources with his/her classmates (the student becomes the teacher in each instance). When all four students have presented their findings, all students in all groups will have acquired a familiarity with "the story" of Fort Point, Trinity from 1700 to 1820.

Teachers may engage students in a class discussion about reliability of primary sources, using the 1762 diary of Benjamin Lester and the 1775 Letter from de la Motte as examples of primary sources where reliability may play a role in the analysis and interpretation of that period in Newfoundland's history.

As an out-of-class assignment, students may refer to evidence provided in primary sources to demonstrate an understanding of "economic, political and social issues related to Newfoundland and Labrador" during this period. (The fishery was a growing interest, while there were threats to the merchants' economic interest as a result of ongoing conflicts between France and Britain.) Students may record their learning in their journal.

Extension: *(to be completed independently outside of class time)*

Students may be asked to use Internet and other sources to make notes in their journals on the major conflicts between France and Britain from 1700 – 1900.

Teachers may provide the following list:

- Queen Anne's War (1702–1713)
- War of the Quadruple Alliance 1718-1720
- Seven Years War, 1754-1763
- American Revolution, 1779-1783
- Wars of the French Revolution, 1792-1802
- Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815

Students need only acquire a basic understanding that wars between the French and British were almost constant throughout the 1700s and early 1800s, which constantly impacted the economic, political and social development of Trinity.

Assessment and Evaluation

For this learning activity, teachers may

- examine the detail and level of effort students demonstrate in the completion of their **organizers**;
- use a simple rubric to assess each student's engagement in the cooperative learning activities; and
- measure the depth of thinking / reflection provided by students in their journal entries.

Summary for Teacher (Activation)

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.

Reliability

- To focus students' attention on interrogating a source to determine accuracy, objectivity, completeness, bias, or prejudice, teachers are encouraged to remind students they should be always mindful of who wrote/produced the artifacts, the purpose or motive and whether the artifact "fits" the time period and is supported by other evidence.
- Later on in this Learning Activity, teachers can return to the 1762 diary of Benjamin Lester and the 1775 Letter from de la Motte as examples of primary sources that bring with them personal and emotional considerations. In assuming the role of historians, students need to consider the social, political and historical context of the individual or group producing a source of evidence. They should consistently ask the five W's: who, what, when, where, and why?

ORGANIZER # 2: Fortification of Trinity, 1746-1762

Artifact	My Notes / Observations
<p>Plan of Admiral's Point, 1748 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 25) This image lacks clarity. Try to note the plans for cannons and buildings.</p>	
<p>State and Condition of Admiral's (Fort) Point, 1748 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only the section above the line in the document (or before the paragraph discussing the "legend" in text attachment). • Information below the line or legend was added to the primary source much later. 	
<p>Report from Fort Point, 1749 (THS virtual Gallery, Image 26)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the text attachment to summarize the group stationed at the Fort 	
<p>Plan of Admiral's (Fort) Point, 1762 and Legend (THS virtual Gallery, Images 29 & 30)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the legend (Image 30) to help examine the Plan (Image 29) and to develop a summary. 	
<p>Cartographic Map of Trinity Harbour, 1762 (THS virtual Gallery, image 31, the most detailed of Trinity and the Fort during the period)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the components of the Fort. 	

ORGANIZER # 3: Destruction of Fortifications at Trinity in 1762 as told by Benjamin Lester in his diary, (THS virtual gallery, specific images between 39 and 50)

Note: *The entries have many spelling and usage errors. The text attachment that accompanies each image will help pull the main points out of each entry.*

Entries for Focus	My Summaries / Observations
<p>Friday-Saturday, July 16th - 18th (How the invasion began)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a very brief summary. 	
<p>Monday-Thursday, July 19th - 22nd (Demands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What items did the French want? • What items did they wish to destroy? 	
<p>Friday-Sunday, July 23rd - 25th (Destruction of arms & Fort)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus only on destruction of the Fort. 	
<p>Sunday, August 1st (end of destruction and invasion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus only on destruction as the French left. 	
<p>Reliability of Source</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How reliable is a personal diary? Speculate as to why Benjamin Lester kept a daily diary during this period. • How might his entries be corroborated (supported)? 	

ORGANIZER # 4: Destruction of Fortifications at Trinity 1762 as told by Chevalier de la Motte, in a letter (THS virtual Gallery, images 59-63)

Note: *The text attachments that accompany each image may help pull the main points out of the letter.*

Section of the Letter	My Notes / Responses
<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What reasons did de la Motte give for the French invasion of Trinity? (page 1, paragraph 1) 	
<p>July 14th (Arrival off Admiral's Point)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did de la Motte get information about supplies in Trinity (pages 1 & 2, paragraph 2) 	
<p>July 15th (Surrender of Trinity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize events that led to the unconditional surrender of Trinity. (Pages 2 & 3) • Speculate why the English offered no resistance, even though they had soldiers, artillery, and inhabitants armed to fight. 	
<p>July 16th (Commander Boisgelin's Arrival)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize what happened after Boisgelin arrived with four more French ships (page 4, paragraph 2). • What were de la Motte's orders from Boisgelin? 	
<p>Reliability of Source</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did de la Motte write this letter in late February 1775, two and a half years after the invasion? Reread the last two paragraphs, pages 4 and 5 • How might de la Motte's account be corroborated (supported)? 	

ORGANIZER # 5: Evidence from Royal Engineer's Report, 1812

Category	My Notes / Observations
Weapons (cannons) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was left from 1762?• What was added by end of 1812?	
Buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was left from 1762?• What was added by end of 1812?	
Ammunition <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was available before re-construction?• What was added to the supply in 1812?	
Soldiers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many soldiers?• How were they organized?• Check out the "Royal Trinity Volunteer Rangers" reference in Clinch's letter to Judge Buchan, March 1813 (THS Image 95)	
Reliability of Source <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would a report such as this be accurate?• What does the report add to the evidence about the fortification of Trinity?	

ORGANIZER # 6: Evidence from Judge Buchan's Letters & Responses

Buchan's Letters to Magistrates & Responses	
The Letters	My Notes / Observations
<p>Buchan's Letter, February 22, 1813</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was Judge David Buchan representing? • Why was a series of signal stations believed to be important in 1813? 	
<p>Buchan's Letter, March 11, 1813</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the purpose of Buchan's letter of March 11, 1813, with respect to the signaling station? (Pay particular attention to paragraph three of Buchan's letter.) 	
<p>Responses from Magistrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information regarding the fortification of Trinity is revealed in the Magistrates' letter? 	
<p>Reliability of Source</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What value does the information supplied by John Clinch and David Durell (Justices of the Peace) add to the evidence surrounding the fortification of Trinity? 	

ORGANIZER # 7: Evidence from Archaeologists (some guiding questions)

Archaeological Dig at Fort Point Trinity	
The Dig	My Notes / Observations
<p>The Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who did the Archaeological study (leader; team; how many)? When?	
<p>The Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did the Archaeologists use as references? (See THS virtual Gallery, Images 166 and 167.) Why were these references used?• Which sites around the Fort were studied? (See THS virtual Gallery, Images 151 and 163.)	
<p>The Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the general findings from the dig? (See THS virtual Gallery, Image 165.)• What types of artifacts were uncovered? (See THS virtual Gallery, Images 168 and 171.)	
<p>Reliability of Source</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What value did the Archaeological dig add to the evidence available from other sources?	