

KIDS’ HISTORY – JULY 2004

### The Quartermaster

**Note to teachers:** This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the “Michigan Time Traveler” page published in the *Lansing State Journal* on July 14, 2004. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

**MASTERY** (*SOC I. 2. Comprehending the Past; SOC I.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past; ELA. I. Meaning and Communication in Context*)

**What Did the Quartermaster Do?** (A U.S. Army quartermaster was responsible for transporting safely all the people, food and supplies needed to build the fort. He provided soldiers with uniforms, pots and pans, and tools. He supervised construction of buildings, docks and roads. He bought horses and oxen and the hay to feed them. He was responsible for moving and storing these supplies.)

**Recreating History—Through Three-Dimensional Objects** What are some of the jobs associated with creating a history museum exhibit? (Historian, designer, collection manager and carpenter.) What different kinds of three-dimensional objects do visitors see at an exhibit? (Real artifacts found by archaeologists. Reproduction artifacts that museum team members make or buy. Background setting to give the visitor a better sense of the historical environment.) What is the difference between how museums treat real artifacts and reproduction artifacts? Why is there a difference? (Visitors can touch reproduction artifacts. They cannot touch real artifacts because they might damage them.)

**What Was a “Housewife” for a Soldier at Fort Wilkins?** (Soldiers carried “housewives” to keep sewing needles, thread, thimbles and patches—scraps of fabric.) How did a museum team member create a reproduction “housewife?” (She researched fabric patterns, then went to a fabric store to match them with similar modern-day prints. She drew a pattern from the original, cut it out of the fabric and then hand-sewed it together.) Why do you think she hand-sewed it instead of using a sewing machine?)

**ACTIVITY ONE: Food Packaging—Tin Cans and More: Then and Now** (*SOC IV. Individual and Household Choices; ELA 6. Voice; Arts 2. Creating*)

- **Explain:** Soldiers who lived at Fort Wilkins from 1844 to 1846 left the fort to serve in the Mexican War. No one lived at the fort for 20 years. A second group of soldiers was stationed at the fort after the Civil War from 1867 to 1870. The army sent them there because it did not have other places for them to live in the Great Lakes area. The introduction of tin cans for preserving food and the opening of the Soo Locks—connecting Lakes Superior and Huron—made it possible for the quartermaster, Lieutenant Liedtke, to order foods such as milk, cranberries, cranberry sauce, peaches, pears, peas, tomatoes, lima beans and raspberry jam to supplement regular army rations.
- **Discuss:** Food in 1870 could be fresh, dried or canned. Ask students to think about all the different ways we preserve and package food today. (Plastic, paper, tin can, rubber, cardboard, foil, refrigeration.) How does this packaging make a difference in how we eat? How long do food items last? What are some of the differences between fresh and preserved foods?
- **Activity:** Make copies of page four and pass them out. Ask students to look at home for how similar foods are packaged (or bring in packages or use a grocery store advertisement from a newspaper). Have them describe the packaging in words and compare the information on the packaging to the 1870s packaging.

## **ACTIVITY TWO: Write a Letter!**

*(SOC III, 5 American government and World Affairs; SOC V.1 Information Processing; ELA 2. Meaning and Communication: Writing; ELA 4. Language)*

### **Part I:**

- **Explain:** Officers, non-commissioned officers (sergeants and corporals) and enlisted men could bring their families to Fort Wilkins, but most enlisted men did not. Many were not married: they had little money to care for their families and life at a distant outpost was dull and hard. The higher his rank, the more likely a soldier would have his wife and children with him. The few enlisted men who brought their families to Fort Wilkins lived in quarters for married enlisted men. Their wives often did soldiers' laundry or other work to earn extra money for their families. Everyone could write home, but the letter would take 18 days to get to Detroit in the 1840s on sailing ship. In the 1860s' it would take three days to get there by steamboat. Today, it would take 11 to 14 hours to get there by truck at 55 miles an hour.
- **Discuss:** Have students imagine what life must have been like for these soldiers and their families. How would they feel to be there? What would be difficult? What would be easy? What would they like and not like? For more background information about a similar frontier fort, ask them to go to <http://www.nps.gov/fosc/lof.htm>
- **Activity:** Have students write a letter home from Fort Wilkins. (They can imagine they are a soldier or a soldier's wife.)

### **Part II:**

- Have a discussion with students about what they know about the war in Iraq. Unlike the soldiers who served at Fort Wilkins, United State soldiers who serve in Iraq are doing so during wartime. Do students know anyone who is over there now or who has gone there? Do they have any relatives who have served in the military there?
- Then, have each student find an article in the newspaper about a United States soldier who is currently in Iraq or who has served and come back to the United States. Have them give a brief oral summary of the article. What did they learn about the soldier? His/her family, experience?
- Ask each student to write a letter to that soldier—whether the soldier is still in Iraq or has returned to the U.S. Ask them to draw a picture for the soldier.

**ACTIVITY THREE: Design a Class Badge** *(Arts 2 Creating; Arts 5, Connecting to the Arts, other disciplines, and Life; ELA 4. Meaning and Communication in Context)*

**Explain:** Everything on a soldier's uniform tells something about him—whether he is an officer or enlisted man and what he does. The quartermaster at Fort Wilkins kept extra insignia in stock in case of promotion or damage. A symbol uses words and/or design to represent an idea. When wearing a symbol in the form of a badge, an individual is communicating specific information to other people.

**Discuss:** Make copies of page three and pass them out to students.

- Have students discuss the insignia on the page. What does each one symbolize?
- Then discuss with students what a class badge might look like. If they were going to an event where other students would be from other schools, what would they want their badge to communicate to those students? (Their grade, their school.)

### **Activity:**

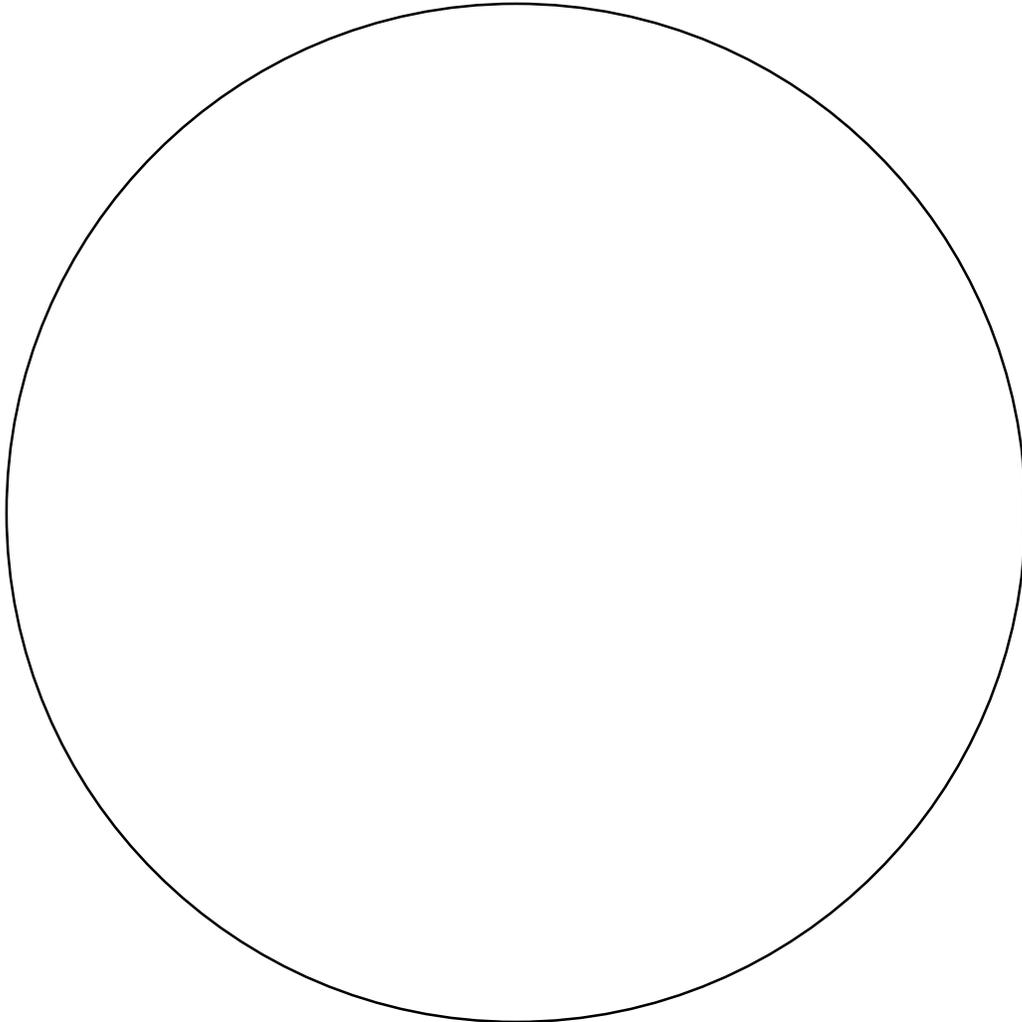
- Ask each student to design a class badge with word(s) and/or visual image(s).
- Have them sketch their ideas first on another piece of paper before they make their final copy. Then have students vote on which one they like the best. Be sure they give supporting reasons why.

# Design a Badge



The brass metal insignia, or symbols on this hat (kepi) would have been worn by an enlisted soldier in the Infantry at Fort Wilkins.

- The letter “K” stands for his unit, Company K, one of several companies that made up the 1st infantry regiment, symbolized by the number “1.”
- The round bugle badge was the traditional symbol of the Infantry, as they used music played on bugles to give orders to troops.



# FOOD PACKAGING—THEN AND NOW

Photos Courtesy of Sullivan Press

	NOW	
1870s	Describe the packaging of similar food today.	Sketch the modern package of the food item.
<p><b>Picture can label for tomatoes</b></p> 		
<p><b>Picture of can label for peaches</b></p> 		
<p><b>Picture of can label for milk</b></p> 		