

THE ORDER OF GOOD CHEER: LIVING IT UP AT “CLUB CHAMPLAIN”

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INTENDED AGE / SUBJECT AREA

Grade 7, but easily adaptable for all grades in History, Drama, Visual Arts and Family Studies

CONCEPTS

- Colonization; fur trade; a great leader in history; use of primary and secondary sources

BACKGROUND

This is a fun way to start Grade 7 history. My students always have a blast!!! They love to eat anytime, so having role play based around food was heaven for them. Even though not all went according their plan (i.e., an overzealous leader of the Order, food in plastic bags), students felt that they had a taste of the 1600s “Champlain style.”

INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Students will:

- collect information from primary and secondary sources;
- collaborate in groups to achieve a common goal and develop problem solving skills;
- communicate historical information through role play;
- understand the merits of leaders like Champlain, the development of the fur trade in North America and examine colonization.

RECOMMENDED TIME FRAME

Approximately six to nine hours are required. Once Champlain and his time at Port Royal has been introduced to students, examine with them the sources on the Order of Good Cheer. This is one or two hour-long classes (See Appendix A).

The next three to five hours are spent conducting research to embellish their topic, whether they are a cook, a set designer or an actor. They will assign themselves tasks/responsibilities and divide labour. Cooks will most likely prepare food at home, unless arrangements can be made with the cafeteria or home economics teacher. Actors will need to practise toasts, speeches and the procession of the food. Champlain should act as emcee for the event so he will need a script (See Appendices B & C).

Students need one class to decorate, set tables, etc. for the event. The actual event takes more than one class, so we included the lunch hour as 20-30 minutes are needed for clean up.

ACTIVITIES

Part One –

As a class, we discuss the use of primary and secondary sources such as the text by Lescarbot, maps and diagrams by Champlain and slides of the Habitation itself. Students examine the concept of colonization and the fur trade through activities in the textbook and by examining video clips from the *Origins: A History of Canada* series. I wear my fur coat to school and use my personal pelts to teach about the fur trade and felt-making.

Part Two –

At the end of the unit, students are broken into interest groups (cooks, actors, set designers) to re-enact “the Order.” Students took on roles like Native traders and characters of Port Royal. All other students act as workers during the re-enactment.

Several classes were allotted to collect research and plan collaboratively. On the big day, the Library was turned over to the Habitation. Over two weeks we did two celebrations during our noon hour. My 7C class presented to and challenged 7B, and 7B returned the favour the following week. Students were asked to give reflections which I used to build their assessment.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- Students collect research via the Internet, textbooks, photographs and brochures.
- A great resource is *Champlain's Journal* published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Québec.
- Champlain, Samuel de. *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*. 6 vols. Toronto: The Champlain Society. 1922.
- Lescarbot, Marc. *History of New France*. 3 vols. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1907-1914.
- For the presentation, students use costumes and props to convey information to an audience. For example, I have a selection of furs and artifacts (from my archaeology days) like clay pipes, lead shot and flint for muskets for students to examine. The students decide which props, costumes and decorations to use based on their research. The following are simply suggestions:
 - Fur trade workers (most of the class) — loose, white long-sleeved shirt, baggy pants tucked into tall wool socks and dark shoes.
 - Native guests — fur pelts or faux fur draped or wrapped around body, war paint, headband with feathers sticking out the back, pipes.
 - Champlain, Lescarbot and men of nobility — frilly, loose, white long-sleeved shirt, baggy pants tucked into tall wool socks and dark shoes with bows on top or tall leather boots, large floppy hat with plume or feather, wool cloak, moustaches and beard painted on faces, side sword.
 - Props:
 - Students each bring a large spoon as their eating utensil and dress in period costume gathered at home

- Pewter or silver type candlesticks and candles
- Tea towel for shoulder of Grand Master
- Staff or fancy stick for the Grand Master
- Grand Master's large collar of "the Order" to be worn around neck [large chain in gold or yellow, made of paper]
- Grey or silver coloured paper plates
- Grey or silver plastic cups or mugs
- Empty plain wine bottles (we filled them with juice)
- Baskets and trays to carry food on for the procession
- Set Design:
 - Long tables and benches [gym benches work well]
 - A few large high back chairs [*optional*: cover in fur pelts]
 - Sign for Port Royal made from long paper rolls
 - Long rolls of brown paper to cover tables

About the Educator

Deanna Millard of W.O. Mitchell Elementary School, in Kanata, ON, develops innovative lesson plans for her grade 7/8 class. She uses slides, video, maps, newspapers, political cartoons, skits, artifacts, costumes, letters, journals, music, poetry, paintings, debates, fieldtrips and guest speakers to engage her students. In the "Order of Good Cheer," students live the experiences of the first European settlers in the New World. In the re-enactment of the Charlottetown Conference, students role-play early nation builders and witness the challenges surrounding the development of a new Dominion. Deanna hopes her love of Canadian history will be contagious to her students so that they will never associate it with boredom.

APPENDIX A

L'Ordre de Bon-Temps

- 1603 Pierre DuGua receives a fur trade monopoly in North America from the French king Henri IV on condition that he establish a settlement.
- 1604 The first attempt at settlement occurred on an island at the mouth of the St. Croix River. After a disastrous winter, in which nearly half the colonists died, it was decided to cross the Bay of Fundy and settle at a site suggested by Samuel de Champlain. Here Champlain designed a Habitation – Port Royal.
- 1605 (Winter) Du Pont Gravé was now placed in charge and along with 45 colonists, spent the winter. It was to become the first permanent settlement north of Florida.
- 1606 In late July, a relief ship arrived. Among the new arrivals was Marc Lescarbot, lawyer, poet and playwright.

Champlain and Lescarbot decided to spend the winter. Champlain from earlier experiences was concerned about morale and proper diet. He knew that a cheerful spirit was of utmost importance. Therefore, along with the theatrical talents of his good friend Lescarbot, Champlain founded the Ordre de Bon Temps – Order of Good Times (Cheer). They formed fifteen of the primary persons of the colony into a new order. Each was called Grand Master, in turn, holding office for one day. It was the Grand Master's function to cater for the company. Thus, the table was filled with the luxuries of the forest.

At the same time, they established friendly relations with the local Mi'kmaq Indians, who were frequently present at the feasts. The Order proved to be, in every sense, the life of the settlement.

Perhaps the best description of the proceedings was given by Lescarbot himself, circa 1606:

To keep our table joyous and well provided, an order was established at the board of the said M. de Poutrincourt, which was called the Order of Good Cheer, originally proposed by Champlain. To this Order each man of the said table was appointed Chief Steward in his turn, which came round once a fortnight. Now, this person had the duty of taking care that we were all well and honourably provided for. This was so well carried out that though the epicures of Paris often tell us that we had no Rue aux Ours over there, as a rule we made as good cheer as we could have in this same Rue aux Ours, and at less cost. For there was no one who, two days before his turn came, failed to go hunting or fishing, and to bring back some delicacy in addition to our ordinary fare. So well was this carried out that never at breakfast did we lack some savoury meat of flesh or fish, and still less at our midday or evening meals; for that was our chief banquet, at which the

ruler of the feast or chief butler, whom the savages called Atoctegic, having had everything prepared by the cook, marched in, napkin on shoulder, wand of office in hand, and around his neck the collar of the Order, which was worth more than four crowns; after him all the members of the Order carrying each a dish. The same was repeated at dessert, though not always with so much pomp. And at night, before giving thanks to God, he handed over to his successor in the charge the collar of the Order, with a cup of wine, and they drank to each other. I have already said that we had abundance of game, such as ducks, bustards, grey and white geese, partridges, larks and other birds; moreover moose, caribou, beaver, otter, bear, rabbits, wild-cats, raccoons, and other animals such as the savages caught, whereof we made dishes well worth those of the cook-shop in the Rue aux Ours, and far more: for of all our meats none is so tender as moose-meat (whereof we also made excellent pasties) and nothing so delicate as beaver's tail. Yea, sometimes we had half a dozen sturgeon at once, which the savages brought us, part of which we bought, and allowed them to sell the remainder publicly and to barter it for bread, of which our men had abundance. As for the ordinary rations brought from France, they were distributed equally to great and small alike; and, as we have said, the wine was served in like manner.

The spirit was one of joy, cheer, and fun. An escape from the “winter of your mind.”

“And,” says Lescarbot, in closing his bill of fare, “whatever our gourmands at home may think, we found good cheer at Port Royal.” And so shall you.

Costumes To aid in creating the atmosphere of 1606, ask all delegates to prepare a historical costume. This can be done very simply with:

- Dark shoes
- Dark mid-calf length socks pulled up over the pants
- A white loose-fitting shirt with the collar tucked under to give a collar-less impression
- A scarf or sash around the waist
- If western hats are available, turn one side up (Australian-like), maybe attach a feather for the plume
- Other options include dressing up as aboriginals or French gentlemen

Remember, the most important part of the costume is the cheerful spirit and warm heart.

Photos of my students presenting their version



APPENDIX B: Student Assignment Sheet

Champlain's Order of Good Cheer

We are going to journey back in time to 1605 Port Royal, Nova Scotia to get a taste of what life was like for the small isolated fur trading post.

In order to recreate the spirit of Champlain's social club, everyone must come dressed in period costume, bring a large spoon to eat with and participate on a team. The class will be divided into three teams: Food Preparation, Set Design and Acting.

The festivities will take place in the library on _____ where our class will prepare a 1600s wilderness meal for another class. Then that class will receive the collar of the order and reciprocate to us on _____. The teams from each class will have say in the evaluation of the opposing teams' presentation. Reflections concerning the knowledge gained from this role play are to be ready for the next history class.

Here is how you will be marked as a team:

1) Authenticity/content:

- Research will be required as you are to recreate the 1600s through costume, food and/or set design. Use of appropriate props and accents (French "c'est bon!")

2) Presentation:

- Recital of prose from the time/toasts (role play of key characters)
- Presentation of food, setting should take us back to Champlain's dining hall
- Pomp and circumstance, march the food in/pray before the meal
- Passing of the collar to the next leader, toasts/words of thanks by invited guests/Champlain steers the activity as the Master of Ceremonies
- Room has the "feel" of the Habitation

3) Equal share:

- Everyone has a role and work has been evenly divided amongst team. On task: behaviour when preparing for presentation

4) The Good Cheer Spirit:

- Students should enthusiastically recreate the spirit of good will and friendly competition

Good luck and enjoy!
Henri IV King of France

APPENDIX C: Considerations

Food Preparation:

- Food must be based on types that could be hunted and/or gathered from the forest in Nova Scotia (e.g., deer, partridge, wild ducks, local fish) or food, such as wheat, brought from France as supplies
- Of course, many of these items are hard/expensive to get and students may not be adventuresome enough to try them so you can substitute certain modern foods for meals of the past. For example, instead of duck or partridge, serve Shake 'n Bake chicken drumsticks.
- You need to create a 1600s menu with that will include a main meal, bread (in loaf form) and of course, dessert (avoid purchasing convenience or junk food items, and do not use modern day containers or plastic bags)
- Present food neatly on platters and baskets to be marched in by the "Order."
- Need butter and some knives for spreading
- Drinking water in pitchers, fill empty wine bottles with juice
- Plus use your imagination through research

Set Design:

- Turn the library into Port Royal's dining room
- Sign for Port Royal and or Coat of Arms
- Place furs around the room and on Champlain's chair
- Cover long tables with brown paper; adorn with candlesticks/candles, paper plates, plastic glasses; provide bench seating, enough for every student and teacher
- Special seating arrangement for Champlain, Marc Lescarbot, apothecary Louis Hebert and Mi'kmaq guests
- Fireplace near the table of the key people to warm them
- Crucifix
- French flag/coat of arms
- Plus use your imagination through research

Role Play:

- Key players: Champlain, Marc Lescarbot (poet, playwright), Louis Hebert (apothecary), Grand Master (head cook from Food Team), Micmaq guests
- Special dress for French gentlemen (fancy hat, long coat or short cape, fancy shirt, leather shoes or boots) and Natives; use accents where possible
- Lead the food procession into Library (food on trays should be held high)
- Give toast [*your group provides wine (grape juice)] near the end of the lunch (toast is to the Grand Master and to next leader)
- Champlain emceeds dinner activities (says who eats when/who speaks when)
- Lescarbot may want to do a short recital from a play or the 1606 description (App. A)
- Plus use your imagination through research