

# Teachers Guide

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## “Who Was George Bonga” Multidisciplinary Classroom Activities

Teachers guide for the Young Naturalists article “Who Was George Bonga?” by William Durbin.  
Illustrated by Chris Gall. Published in the November–December 2010 *Minnesota Conservation  
Volunteer*, or visit [www.mndnr.gov/young\\_naturalists/george\\_bonga](http://www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists/george_bonga).

*Young Naturalists teachers guides are provided free of charge to classroom teachers, parents, and students. This guide contains a brief summary of the article, suggested independent reading levels, word count, materials list, estimates of preparation and instructional time, academic standards applications, preview strategies and study questions overview, adaptations for special needs students, assessment options, extension activities,*



*Web resources (including related Conservation Volunteer articles), copy-ready study questions with answer key, and a copy-ready vocabulary sheet and vocabulary study cards. There is also a practice quiz (with answer key) in Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments format. Materials may be reproduced and/or modified a to suit user needs. Users are encouraged to provide feedback through an online survey at [www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/activities/ynstudyguides/survey.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/activities/ynstudyguides/survey.html). If you are downloading articles from the website, please note that only Young Naturalists articles are available in PDF.*

### Summary

“Who Was George Bonga?” is a blend of fact and fiction. In “Meet the Guide,” the author tells a story through the eyes of 14-year-old Louie Pomeroy, a paddler in George Bonga’s fur trading expedition from Fond du Lac to Leech Lake in 1836. Sidebars provide a brief biography of the famous trader and guide.

### Suggested reading levels:

Third through eighth grades

### Total words:

2,120

### Materials:

Paper, poster board, pencils, pens, markers, and print/video resources your media specialist may provide

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

**Preparation time:** One to two hours, not including time for extension activities

**Estimated instructional time:** One or two 50-minute class periods (not including extensions)

**Minnesota Academic Standards applications:** “Who was George Bonga?” may be applied to the following Minnesota Department of Education standards:

### **Language Arts\***

#### **I. Reading and Literature**

- A. Word Recognition, Analysis and Fluency
- B. Vocabulary Expansion
- C. Comprehension

#### **II. Writing**

- A. Types of Writing
- B. Elements of Composition
- C. Spelling
- D. Research
- E. Handwriting and Word Processing

#### **III. Speaking, Listening and Viewing**

- A. Speaking and Listening
- B. Media Literacy

### **Social Studies**

#### **Grades K–3**

##### **I. U.S. History**

- C. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the people who settled in North America

#### **Grades 4–8**

##### **I. U.S. History**

- E. The student will demonstrate knowledge of western expansion, conflict, and reform in America.

### **II. Minnesota History**

- B. The student will demonstrate knowledge of early explorers and fur traders in Minnesota and the impact of the fur trade on both European and Native societies.

### **V. Geography**

- D. Interconnections: The student will give examples that demonstrate how people are connected to each other and the environment.

### **VI. Economics**

- A. The student will understand the concept of interdependence in relation to producers and consumers.

### **Arts**

#### **Grades K–8**

- 1. Artistic Foundations: Visual Arts, Music
- 2. Artistic Process: Create or Make: Visual Arts, Music
- 3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present: Visual Arts, Music
- 4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique: Visual Arts, Music

*\* Language Arts standards were undergoing a major revision at the time this article was published. Format and content will change significantly. Minnesota Academic Standards are available at [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us). Teachers who find other connections to standards are encouraged to contact Minnesota Conservation Volunteer.*

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

**Preview** Use the **KWL** strategy (Ogle, 1986) to find out what your students already know (**K**) about the fur trade, what they would like to learn (**W**), and eventually what they learned (**L**) while reading the article and related materials and participating in extension activities. You might begin by asking small groups to brainstorm their ideas. Then combine the groups’ data to make a class list. Display your **K** and **W** ideas on poster board or paper (see Vocabulary preview). Add to your **L** list as you read and discuss the article. See [www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/graphic\\_org/kwl](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/graphic_org/kwl) for a KWL generator that will produce individual organizers for your students. Individual organizers may be useful as students read the article for answers to **W** questions. KWL also gives you the opportunity to introduce interdisciplinary connections you will make during extension activities. If you use the article in an art class you may wish to focus your prereading discussion on the artist’s technique in correlating pictures with text.

**Vocabulary preview** See the copy-ready vocabulary list included in this guide. You may wish to modify the list based on your knowledge of your students’ needs or the subject you are teaching. Pretesting vocabulary individually, in small groups, or with your entire class can be an effective vocabulary preview strategy. You may then post-test at the conclusion of this activity (see Assessment section below). *Pay particular attention to italicized words.*

You may wish to use the study cards found at the end of this guide. Cut along the horizontal line; fold in the middle and tape or staple. Study cards (see *Strategic Tutoring*, Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker, 2000) can be applied to any subject area. On one side of the card, in large letters, write a key word or phrase that students are expected to know. In smaller letters frame the word or phrase in a question or statement. On the other side of the card, in large letters, write the answer to the question. Finally, in smaller letters, frame the answer in a question or statement. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases.

**Study questions overview** Preview the entire guide with your class before you read the article. You may wish to read the story aloud and complete the study questions in class, in small groups, or as an independent activity. The questions may be assigned as homework, depending on the reading ability of your students. Inclusion teachers may provide more direct support to special needs students (see Adaptations section). The study questions may be also used as a quiz. Note: Items 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 16 and the Challenge require varying degrees of critical thinking.

**Adaptations** Read aloud to special needs students. Abbreviate the study questions or highlight priority items to be completed first. If time allows, remaining items may be attempted. Peer helpers, paraprofessionals, or adult volunteers may lend a hand with the study questions. With close teacher supervision, cooperative groups can also offer effective support to special needs students, especially for extension activities.

**Assessment** You may use all or part of the study guide, combined with vocabulary, as a quiz. Other assessment ideas include: (1) Students may retell the story from Louie’s and/or George’s point of view in an essay. Require a beginning, middle, and end. You may also require a minimum number of words. (2) Students may submit multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer questions. The best items may be selected for a class quiz. (3) Poster presentations, including songs, may depict one or more scenes from the story. Students may work in groups or individually. (4) If you use “George and the Voyageurs” (See Extension activities), you may wish to use some assessment activities for that story.

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Extension activities

1. Take a field trip to one of Minnesota’s Living History fur posts. See links in Web resources.
2. Music was integral to voyageur culture. The Minnesota Historical Society offers *Songs of the Voyageurs* (CD and interpretive guide with lyrics) at [http://shop.mnhs.org/moreinfo.cfm?product\\_id=362](http://shop.mnhs.org/moreinfo.cfm?product_id=362). Students may learn voyageur songs to accompany poster presentations or in music class.
3. This article references the beaver, a “keystone species” in Minnesota. Challenge students to learn more about the beaver, its impact on our landscape, and its economic value to 18th and 19th century America.
4. Trapping has been challenged by animal rights activists as an inhumane practice. Allow students time for research, followed by a debate for and against trapping.
5. The Anishinabe, or Ojibwe, people have lived in northern Minnesota for hundreds of years. They were important players in the fur trade. Challenge students to learn more about Minnesota’s first people and to share what they learn through writing and art.
6. Marc Hequet’s article, “George and the Voyageurs” (see Related Articles) is an excellent companion for this article. A teachers guide is available with suggestions for inclusion in your curriculum.

### Web resources

#### Living history fur posts

[www.whiteoak.org](http://www.whiteoak.org)  
[www.mnhs.org/places/sites/nwcfp/index.htm](http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/nwcfp/index.htm)  
[www.nps.gov/grpo](http://www.nps.gov/grpo)

#### Voyageurs

[www.wildernessclassroom.com/www/schoolhouse/boreal\\_library/voyageurs/index.htm](http://www.wildernessclassroom.com/www/schoolhouse/boreal_library/voyageurs/index.htm)  
[collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/6/v06i02p155-167.pdf](http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/6/v06i02p155-167.pdf)  
[www.mnhs.org/places/sites/nwcfp/docs\\_pdfs/Suggested\\_Reading.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/nwcfp/docs_pdfs/Suggested_Reading.pdf)  
[www.furtrade.org/index.html](http://www.furtrade.org/index.html)  
[www.whiteoak.org/learning/lrn-online.htm](http://www.whiteoak.org/learning/lrn-online.htm)

#### Beavers

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/mammals/beaver.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mammals/beaver.html)  
[www.beaversww.org/beaver.html](http://www.beaversww.org/beaver.html)  
[www.nhptv.org/natureworks/beaver.htm](http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/beaver.htm)  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith\\_wildlife/beaver/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith_wildlife/beaver/index.html)

#### Ojibwe

[www.tolatsga.org/ojib.html](http://www.tolatsga.org/ojib.html)  
[www.bigorrin.org/chippewa\\_kids.htm](http://www.bigorrin.org/chippewa_kids.htm)

#### Trapping

[files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/hunting/2010/full\\_regs.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/hunting/2010/full_regs.pdf)  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/hunting/trapping/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/hunting/trapping/index.html)  
[latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2009/02/controversy-swi.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2009/02/controversy-swi.html)  
[www.agfc.com/resources/Publications/trapping\\_biologist\\_bro.pdf](http://www.agfc.com/resources/Publications/trapping_biologist_bro.pdf)

#### Teacher Resources

[www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/index.html)

\*Note: All Web sites were active at the time of this guide’s publication. However, some may no longer be active when this guide is accessed.

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Related articles

Related *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* Young Naturalists articles are available online at [www.mndnr.gov/volunteer/articles/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/volunteer/articles/index.html), including:

#### July–August 1995

“Eager Beavers” (YN article)

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/young\\_naturalists/beavers/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/young_naturalists/beavers/index.html)

#### May–June 1999

“Six Easy Paddle Trips”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun99/paddle.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun99/paddle.html)

#### March–April 2001

“Going with the Flow”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/marapr01/senseofplace.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/marapr01/senseofplace.html)

#### May–June 2004

“Let’s go Canoeing” (YN article with teachers guide)

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young\\_naturalists/canoeing/canoeing.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young_naturalists/canoeing/canoeing.pdf)

#### January–February 2005

“Between Ice and Hard Times”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/janfeb05/hardtimes.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/janfeb05/hardtimes.html)

#### November–December 2005

“George and the Voyageurs” (YN article with teachers guide)

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young\\_naturalists/voyageurs/voyageurs.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young_naturalists/voyageurs/voyageurs.pdf)

#### November–December 2006

“Wild Engineers” (YN article with teachers guide)

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young\\_naturalists/wild\\_engineers/wild\\_engineers.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/volunteer/young_naturalists/wild_engineers/wild_engineers.pdf)

#### January–February 2008

“In the Vanishing Footsteps of Voyageurs”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/janfeb08/vanishing\\_footsteps.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/janfeb08/vanishing_footsteps.html)

#### May–June 2008

“Retracing the Red River Trail”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun08/red\\_river\\_trail.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun08/red_river_trail.html)

#### May–June 2010

“Wild Country ... Still”

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun10/cloquet.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun10/cloquet.html)

### References

Hock, M.F., Deshler, D.D., and Schumaker, J.B. *Strategic Tutoring*. Lawrence, Kan.: Edge Enterprises, 2000.  
Ogle, D.S. K-W-L Group Instructional Strategy. In A.S. Palincsar, D.S. Ogle, B.F. Jones, and E.G. Carr (Eds.), *Teaching Reading as Thinking: Teleconference Resource Guide*, pp.11–17. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1986.

# “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

## Study Questions

Teachers guide for the Young Naturalists article “Who Was George Bonga?” by William Durbin. Illustrated by Chris Gall. Published in the Nov.–Dec. 2010 *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, or visit [www.mndnr.gov/young\\_naturalists/george\\_bonga](http://www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists/george_bonga).

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1. Why was George Bonga well known in the Lake Superior region? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Was George a black man or a white man? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why wasn't George a slave? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How old was George when the story “Meet the Guide” took place? \_\_\_\_\_ How did you get your answer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Was Louie Pomeroy an experienced voyageur? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why was George disappointed when he met Louie? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you suppose voyageurs were short men? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe George's sense of humor. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What did George take on the trip to trade for furs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Find “trade goods” in your vocabulary list. Explain why George included beads in his trade goods bundles.

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11. Why do you think voyageurs sang songs as they paddled? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. How did George test himself? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. How much did voyageurs carry on portages? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Why was George chosen to guide the Lewis Cass expedition? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Why was the Savannah Portage the most difficult part of the journey? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What is a “hero’s welcome?” \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What ended George’s fur trading career? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. In his later years what did George fight for? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Challenge:* At a time in our history when most black people were slaves, and many white people held racist views, why do you think George was so admired by Native Americans and voyageurs?

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## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Study Questions Answer Key

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1. Why was George Bonga well known in the Lake Superior region? **George was honest and talented.**
2. Was George a black man or a white man? Explain. **He was both. George was African American, but on the census he was considered a white man.**
3. Why wasn't George a slave? **George's grandfather, who had been an indentured servant, was freed after his master died. George's grandparents had then become fur traders.**
4. How old was George when the story “Meet the Guide” took place? **34** How did you get your answer? **George was born in 1802. The story took place in 1836.  $1836 - 1802 = 34$ .** (Students may use other methods to reach the answer.)
5. Was Louie Pomeroy an experienced voyageur? No Why or why not? **He was only 14 years old and it was his first season as a voyageur.**
6. Why was George disappointed when he met Louie? **Two other voyageurs were supposed to have come with Louie, which meant the group would be short of paddlers.**
7. Why do you suppose voyageurs were short men? **Answers may vary. Space was limited in canoes. Short, strong men made better paddlers and portagers.**
8. Describe George's sense of humor. Answers may vary. **He enjoyed teasing, but in a kind way.**
9. What did George take on the trip to trade for furs? **Trade goods, guns, gunpowder and lead shot, side pork, iron works, tobacco and kettles.**
10. Find “trade goods” in your vocabulary list. Explain why George included beads in his trade goods bundles. **Answers may vary. Native Americans valued colorful beads in their arts and crafts.**
11. Why do you think voyageurs sang songs as they paddled? **Answers may vary. They sang to keep the rhythm of paddling, to pass the time, and to keep their spirits up.**
12. How did George test himself? **By carrying a many-hundred-pound load up a steep portage.**
13. How much did voyageurs carry on portages? **Voyageurs usually carried two 90-pound packs.**
14. Why was George chosen to guide the Lewis Cass expedition? **George was an expert canoeist, could speak Ojibwe, and was familiar with the land they were exploring.**
15. Why was the Savannah Portage the most difficult part of the journey? **It was low, swampy land, overgrown with vegetation. Canoes and cargo had to be dragged or carried most of the way.**
16. What is a “hero's welcome?” **A hero's welcome is a wild celebration to honor someone who has done something extraordinary. The people cheered and fired guns to celebrate George's safe arrival with valuable goods to be traded for furs.**
17. What ended George's fur trading career? **Beaver were nearly wiped out by trapping and disease. People in Europe did not want hats made from beaver fur.**
18. In his later years what did George fight for? **George fought for the rights of Native American people.**

*Challenge:* Answers will vary. Students may observe that George's character, knowledge, courage and amazing wilderness skills earned the respect of people he dealt with. Perhaps the color of a person's skin did not matter to Native Americans or voyageurs.



## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments Practice Items

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. When Louie met George Louie was impressed by George’s
  - A. laugh.
  - B. skin color.
  - C. height.
  - D. B and C
2. On the 1814 census there were \_\_\_\_\_ African Americans counted in Minnesota.
  - A. 104
  - B. 114
  - C. 14
  - D. 24
3. In the 1820s and 1830s George worked for
  - A. the American Fur Company.
  - B. the Ojibwe.
  - C. the U.S. Army.
  - D. the Canadian people.
4. Do you think the story about George carrying 700 pounds is exaggerated? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. George’s mother was a member of the
  - A. Leech Lake tribe.
  - B. Pillager band.
  - C. Ojibwe people.
  - D. All of the above

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments Answer Key

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1. When Louie met George Louie was impressed by George’s **D, B** and **C**.
2. On the 1814 census there were **C. 14 African Americans counted in Minnesota**.
3. In the 1820s and 1830s George worked for **A. the American Fur Company**.
4. Do you think the story about George carrying 700 pounds is exaggerated? Why or why not? **Answers will vary, but should be supported with a detail from the story.**
5. George’s mother was a member of the **D. All of the above**.

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Vocabulary

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<b>broadcloth</b>	dense woolen cloth
<b>continental divide</b>	place on the land where water flows in into more than one river system
<b>dalles</b>	French word for rapids
<b>Fort Misery</b>	outpost located near Grand Portage in northwestern Minnesota
<b>indentured servant</b>	laborer or tradesman under contract for a number of years; indentured servants worked often worked for food, clothing, and shelter
<b>iron works</b>	metal tools, traps, and weapons traded for furs
<b>meander</b>	wander or follow a twisting route
<b>North canoe</b>	most common canoe used in the fur trade; usually 24 to 28 feet long and able to carry 3,000 pounds
<b>Northwest gun</b>	lightweight flintlock gun popular as a trade item in the fur trade
<b>pipe break</b>	a time to rest and smoke a pipe
<b>portage</b>	overland route to a waterway
<b>side pork</b>	same cut of meat as bacon before it is cured
<b>tumpline</b>	strap worn across the top of the head that is attached to a pack
<b>trade goods</b>	fur traders carried glass beads, silver jewelry, wool blankets, cooking tools, and linen shirts to trade for beaver pelts and other animal furs
<b>voyageur</b>	French for traveler; fur transporter

## “Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

### Vocabulary Study Cards

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Cut along the horizontal lines, fold in the middle and tape or staple. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases.

What is  
**broadcloth?**

FOLD HERE

A **dense woolen cloth**  
is called

What is a  
**continental divide?**

FOLD HERE

A **place on the land where water flows in into more than one river system** is a

What does **dalles**  
mean?

FOLD HERE

The **French word for rapids** is

Where was  
**Fort Misery?**

FOLD HERE

What **fur trading outpost** was  
**located near Grand Portage in northwestern Minnesota?**

“Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

What is an  
**indentured servant?**

FOLD HERE

A laborer or tradesman under  
**contract for a number of years**  
who often worked for food,  
clothing, and shelter was an

In the fur trade, what were  
**iron works?**

FOLD HERE

**Metal tools, traps, and weapons**  
traded for furs were called

To **meander** is to

FOLD HERE

To **wander or follow a twisting**  
**route** is to

What is a  
**North canoe?**

FOLD HERE

The most common canoe used  
**in the fur trade; usually 24 to 28**  
feet long and able to carry 3,000  
pounds was the

What is a  
**Northwest gun?**

FOLD HERE

A **lightweight flintlock gun**  
popular as a trade item in the fur  
trade was called a

“Who Was George Bonga?”—Teachers Guide

For the voyageurs what was a **pipe break**?

FOLD HERE

For the voyageurs, **a time to rest and smoke a pipe** was called a

What is a **portage**?

FOLD HERE

An **overland route to a waterway** is a

What is **side pork**?

FOLD HERE

The **same cut of meat as bacon before it is cured** is called

What is a **tumpline**?

FOLD HERE

**A strap worn across the top of the head that is attached to a pack** is called a

What did fur traders use for **trade goods**?

FOLD HERE

**Fur traders carried glass beads, silver jewelry, wool blankets, cooking tools, and linen shirts,** which were called

What does  
**voyageur**  
mean?

FOLD HERE

The French word  
for traveler is

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE