

# THANADELTHUR: PEACEMAKER OF THE CHIPEWYAN Online Resource

CELEBRATE CANADA  
through  
READERS' THEATRE

THANADELTHUR:  
PEACEMAKER OF THE CHIPEWYAN



BY CLAUDE BELANGER

By Claude Belanger

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By Claude Belanger  
Editor: Sylvia Gunnery

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Curriculum Plus Publishing Company  
100 Armstrong Avenue  
Georgetown, ON L7G 5S4

Toll free telephone 1-888-566-9730  
Toll free fax 1-866-372-7371  
E-mail [info@fraserdirect.ca](mailto:info@fraserdirect.ca)  
[www.curriculumplus.ca](http://www.curriculumplus.ca)

# Background

## A Summary of the Script

Early in the 18th century, the people of the Cree and Chipewyan First Nations were at war. *Thanadelthur: Peacemaker of the Chipewyan* tells the story of a young Chipewyan woman who brings peace to these neighbouring tribes. Her story is one of courage and wisdom. Her personal characteristics of skill and determination led to the success of a dangerous undertaking. The historical events of this peacemaking venture are documented in the log books of York Factory, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company located at the mouth of the Hayes River, on the western shore of Hudson Bay.

## First Nations people and European fur traders

Thanadelthur lived at a time and place of early contact between European fur traders and First Nations people. The Chipewyan and Cree survived by skilfully exploiting their environment. The Europeans needed a steady and regular supply of goods shipped from Europe. In addition, the Europeans benefited from skills learned and knowledge acquired by contact with indigenous people. First Nations groups obtained tools and other material goods which quickly contributed to the alteration of their way of life.

## Activities Before Reading

1. Examine the title, illustration and other information on both covers of the book. Ask students what they can predict about the storyline from the covers.
2. Note the location of York factory on a map of Canada. Discuss why the Hudson's Bay Company would choose such a site for a trading post.
3. All people need food, shelter and clothing to survive. How would the location of York Factory at this time in history impact on the Hudson's Bay Company's ability to meet their basic needs? Consider: distance from major centers, climate, animal and plant life, and the Indigenous Peoples.
4. Build important vocabulary during your pre-reading discussions, perhaps by creating an anchor chart of words unfamiliar to students. Consult the glossary at the back of the script.
5. At the top of each page of the script is a depiction of the Hudson Bay watershed. What is a watershed? On a map of North America view and discuss the immense size of the Hudson Bay watershed.

## Extending the Experience

1. Pretend that you are a visitor to York Factory in 1714. York Factory is a very busy place. In pairs or in small groups, create a chart to record what you see, hear, touch, taste and smell at York Factory.
2. Using the information in your chart, write a letter home describing some of your experiences.
3. Create a timeline of the major events occurring during Thanadelthur's relationship with The Hudson's Bay Company.
4. In the script, Thanadelthur says, "Finally, the Chipewyan understood that peace would bring a better future." (page 14) How would a peace treaty benefit the Chipewyan, the Cree, and the Hudson's Bay Company? Create a chart to show the benefits to each of the three groups. Which benefits do they share in common?

# Tips for Voice and Expression

Character	Reading Level	Description
Narrator	challenging	The narrator provides background information as well as a clear transition from one scene to another.
James Knight	challenging	the Governor of York Factory, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company on the western shore of Hudson Bay
Hudson's Bay Company Employee #1	easy	an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory
Hudson's Bay Company Employee #2	easy	an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory
William Stuart	moderate	a senior employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory and an assistant to James Knight
Thanadelthur	moderate	a Chipewyan woman

## Books of Interest

*Atlas of the North American Indian*

by Carl Waldman and illustrated by Molly Braun-Waldman  
(Checkmark Books 2000)

*Blackships and Thanadelthur*

by Rick Book (Heartland Publications 2001)

*The Cree People*

by Phyllis Cardinal (Tribal Chiefs Institute 1997)

*The Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*

by Diane Silvey (Kids Can Press 2005)

*Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*

edited by Jennifer Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Broadview Press  
2003), pages 329-364

## Websites of Interest

Thanadelthur – rear view - Province of Manitoba

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/rearview/thanadelthur/index.html>

HBC Heritage – Our History - People

<http://www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/history/people/women/thanadelthur.asp>