

From the Loveland Museum collection: drawing by Harley Clymer 1948

mountain men and

A HISTORY LESSON IN 10 PAGES OR LESS

mariano medina



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The City of Loveland Cultural Services Department strives to enrich lives and connect our community through diverse arts and history experiences.

The Loveland Museum has created a series of quick lessons designed to provide basics on a topic important to our local history. These lessons have been compiled by staff and volunteers at the Loveland Museum. Suggested activities give ideas for hands-on learning and are not intended to be all-inclusive. Other resource links may also be provided in some sections for additional learning.

Introduction

Mountain Men

In 1803, the United States bought land from the French in what was called the Louisiana Purchase. This purchase gave the United States control over land west of the Mississippi River, all the way to the Rocky Mountains. Lewis and Clark explored this land, but so did many others, including who we know as mountain men.

Explorers and mountain men found there were many natural resources that they could use to live off the land and also trade for other items they needed. Mountain men also found that trapping and trading was a great way to make a living. They would hunt in the woods and the animals they hunted and trapped would provide them food and clothes. But they could also trade their items with the Native Americans or other settlers for other tools, food, clothing and horses. Mountain men were some of the first trail makers and pathfinders in Colorado. They came to know the mountains well and served as guides to others who got lost or needed help getting around rough trails.

During the summers, mountain men would come down to the plains to a gathering called Rendezvous. At these events mountain men and Native Americans would trade for several different items they could use for the next year, such as weapons, jerky and meat, vegetables, grains, hides, furs, steel, horses and much more.



Beaver

Learn More

The fashion of wearing fur hats in the early 19th Century meant a great demand for animal pelts, especially beaver. Mountain men made their living by trapping the beaver then trading their pelts to fur trading companies. Rarely would the trappers make a huge profit from the furs, even though the fur trading companies did. However, most mountain men were content with this type of living. They would spend a lot of time in the mountains, away from people, to trap and hunt. They learned how to survive the cold and find food and water by watching Native Americans. They also traded with Native Americans, and even traded FOR them, for example a woman as a wife.

Furs of all kinds had been exported from America to Europe, but by the 1820s the demand for beaver pelts dominated the market. The beaver pelts were used for making men's high-fashioned top hats and coats (think about a photo you've seen of president Abraham Lincoln). Throughout the 1820s and 1830s the demand for the American beaver fur continued to grow, expanding the American fur trade into the Rocky Mountains. Prime beaver skins used in the manufacture of top hats sold for \$6 to \$8 each in markets in St. Louis, New York, and London.

Learn More

Mountain Living

The mountain man depended on these key items for survival:

- **Food-** meat or jerky from bison, elk, or other animals; hardtack (a cracker-like bread); pemmican (mixture of dried meat, dried animal fat, and dried berries).
- **Hats-** made of fur to keep warm, protect from the elements, protect from sun.
- **Clothing-** trousers and shirts from cotton and wool; buckskins jackets and pants made of tanned animal hide (often deer); winter coats made of animal fur (often bison).
- **Shoes-** Moccasins were footwear of choice because they were easy to make and repair.
 - **Weapons-** a knife, a rifle, a powder horn (hollow horn that held gun powder to keep it dry), and bullets.
 - **Possibles bag-** type of backpack that would carry all their items (sharpening stones and files; soup pot; tin plate, bowl and cup; iron forks and knives; wooden spoons; dry tinder in a tinder box and flint and steel (fire starters); bullet mold to make bullets.
 - **Bed Rolls-** wool blankets, buffalo rugs.



Possibles bag



Powder horn

Mariano Medina

Learn More

A man named Mariano Medina was a well known mountain man who eventually settled in the Big Thompson River Valley, where present day Loveland is located. Mariano Medina was born in 1812 in Taos, New Mexico. He spent many years trapping, trading, and guiding in the mountains. He settled on the Big Thompson River in 1858. When Medina built his home, he knew that many settlers were making their way across the plains and travelling through the areas that are now Loveland and Berthoud. Medina saw this influx of pioneers as a business opportunity. He built his own log cabin, along with a store and saloon, cabins to rent, a livery stable to board horses and trading post. The small settlement became known as Namaqua, or "Mariano's Crossing". It became a favorite stopping place for the growing number of western travelers.

Medina built a bridge across the river with a gate at each end and usually charged a dollar to cross. When the river was higher and the wagons and horses did not want to cross at lower areas, Medina would charge more to cross over the safety of the bridge. He is considered one of the first entrepreneurs (self-made businessman) in the area.

Medina's wife was a Native American from the Flathead tribe. He traded horses and blankets for her. Her name was Taconesy (TAK EN E SEE). Taconesy was pregnant and the boy who was born was named Louis Papa, and became Medina's stepson. Louis Papa became a real cowboy in the Loveland area and handled cattle for big ranchers for most of his life.



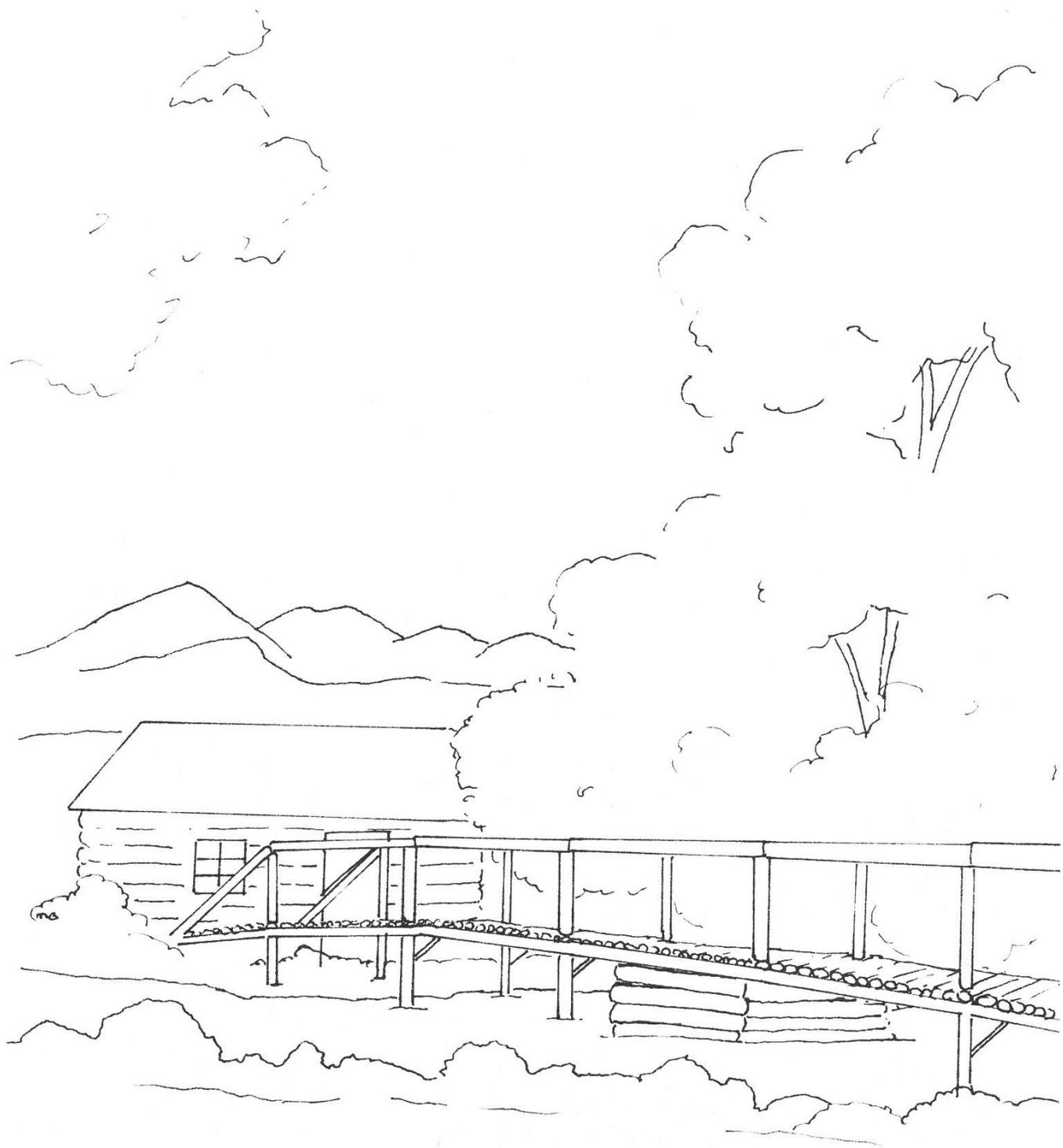
Images from the Loveland Museum collection

ACTIVITY ONE

Medina and his legacy

History Colorado made a video about Mariano Medina to include in their "time machine" at the entrance of their museum. You can view this video on YouTube and learn more about Medina here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPdyIBQnSUC> . Once you learn more, write a sentence or story about him and his importance to the area. Print and color page four, a sketch of Medina's bridge by artist Mary Giacomini, to use as a story cover.



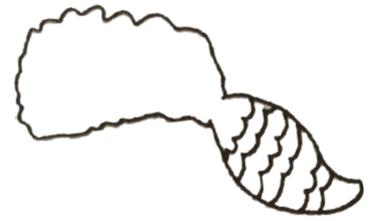


Mariano built a toll bridge across the Big Thompson River. He became rich by charging wagons a fee to use his bridge.

Mariano construyo un puente a través del Big Thompson River. El se hizo rico cobrando peaje a las carretas para usar su puente.

ACTIVITY TWO

Outfit a Mountain Man



Think more about the clothing and tools of a mountain man. They needed many layers to stay warm in the wilderness. They also needed to keep the fur on some of the animal hides to stay warm during the winters. Not all of their clothing was tanned (skinned of the fur). Also, they had many tools that they had to keep with them at all times. On pages six and seven, you will find a mountain man template and a template for some of his basic clothing and tools. Print them, cut them out, and outfit your mountain man. You can use a brown paper bag to add more texture to your mountain man clothing (trace the template onto the bag), and also draw more items and tools to add to his outfit. If you can't print the templates, draw your own mountain man. Be sure to add his surroundings to your drawing... trees, rivers, lakes, mountain, animals and more!



Tracking Animals

ACTIVITY THREE

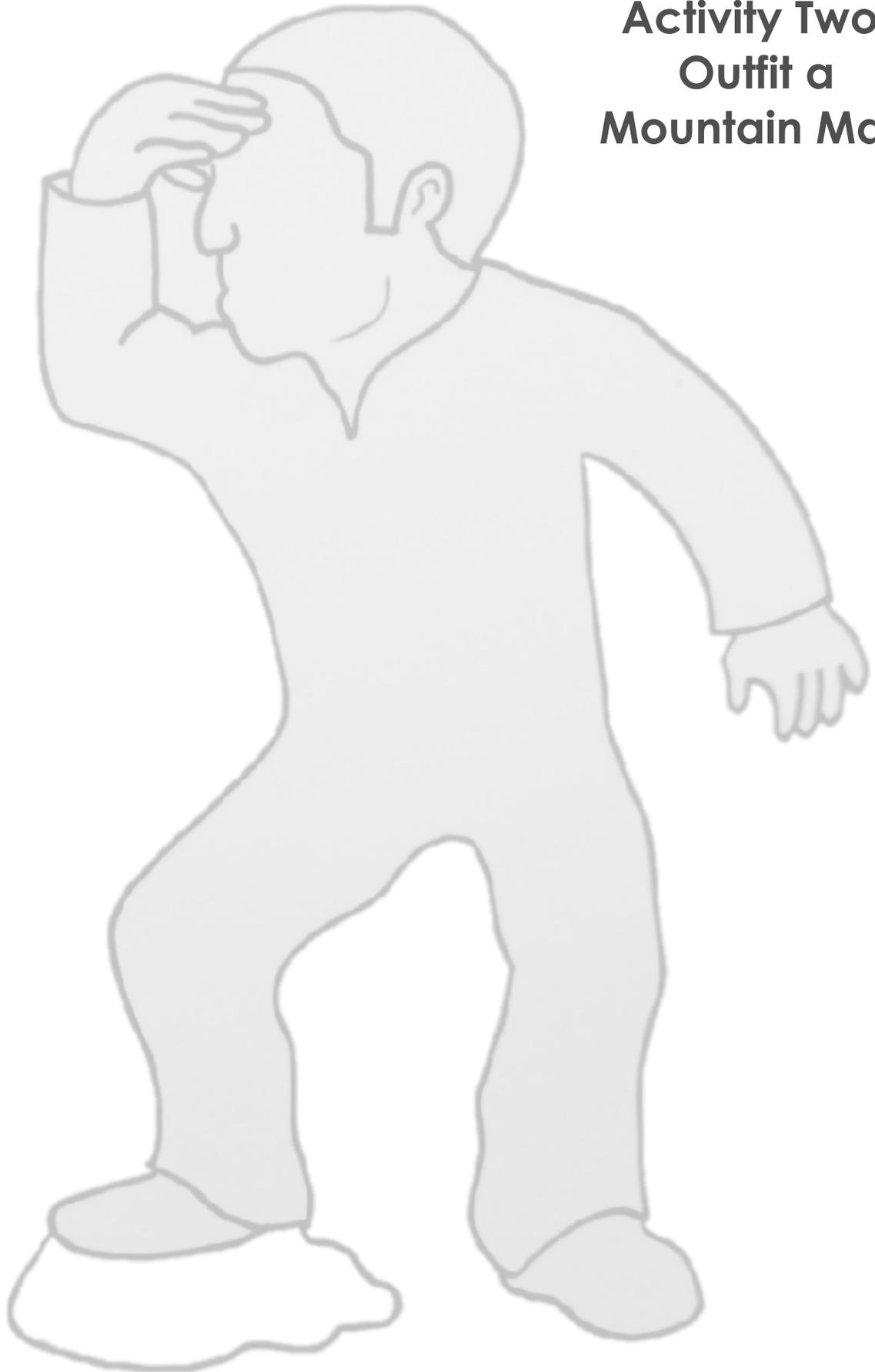
Mountain men found that trapping and trading helped them make a great living. They would hunt and trap in the woods and the animals would provide them sources of food and clothing. But they could also trade their items with Native Americans or other settlers for additional tools, weapons, food, clothing and horses. Mountain men were skilled at tracking animals through the mountains, by examining the animal's footprints, droppings and habits (where they went to eat, for instance). They not only were able to find footprints in snow or mud, but were experts at finding them everywhere. They could tell where animals had been by the smells in the area— not just droppings but how their fur or what they ate smelled. They could also tell by other signs such as broken or bent branches, the patterns of birds over head, or by listening closely to the wind.

Part one: See if you can guess which tracks (footprints) belong to which animal. Print out page eight, cut out each of the squares and use them as a matching game. See who in your household can tell which is which!

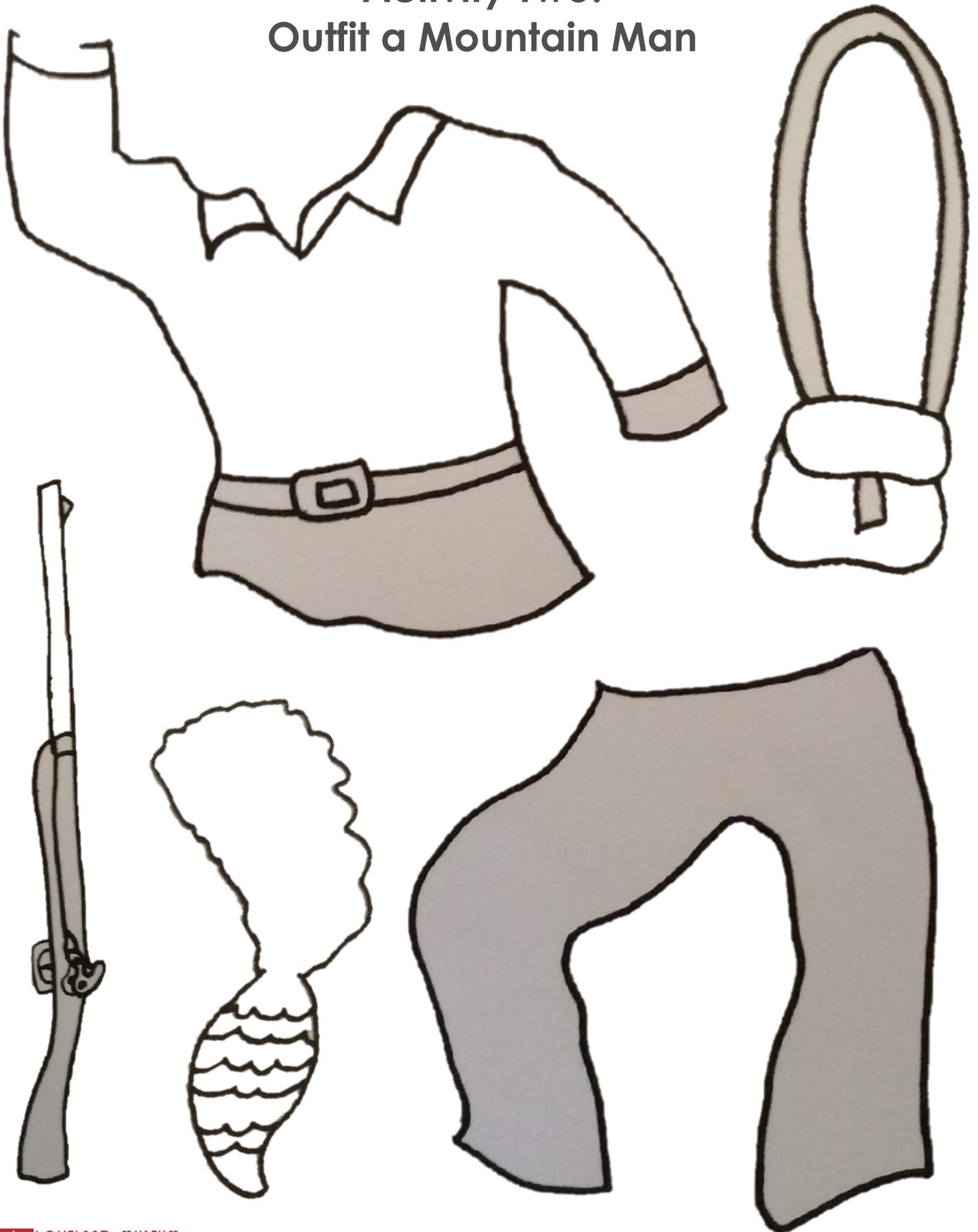
Part two: Take a walk around your neighborhood. See what types of tracks or other clues you can find of animals in the area. You might be able to easily find dog or bird footprints or droppings. Carefully look closer around water or mud to find raccoon, deer, duck prints or other clues.



Activity Two: Outfit a Mountain Man



Activity Two: Outfit a Mountain Man





Activity Three: Tracking Animals

The prints below belong to a deer, bobcat, mouse, beaver, raccoon, coyote, bear and moose. Cut out the squares, mix them up, and play a matching game to see if you can match the print back to the animal.

ACTIVITY FOUR

Iron Fork



Baseball Cap



Possibles Bag



Plastic Cup



Kettle



Money



Raccoon Skin Hat



Back Pack



Tin Cup



Coffee Pot



Beaver Pelt



Fork



Rendezvous

During the summer, mountain men would come down to the plains to festivals called Rendezvous. The mountain men and Native Americans would lay out blankets and trade for several different items that they could use for the next year, such as weapons, clothes, jerky and meat, vegetables, grains, hides, furs, steel, horses and much more.

Part one: Can you match the mountain man's items to the items they resemble in our households? Draw a line from the item of the mountain man to the one we use now in the same way.

Part two: Host a rendezvous! Find things that you are willing to trade for fun, or for something else in the house. For example, find some things that you are willing to get rid of in your room. Set out a blanket and invite others in your household to a rendezvous by making signs to advertise the event. Then, see if anyone in your household will trade with you. Be creative!