



Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada



*A view of the Fort, showing the
Fur Warehouse in the foreground and the
modern Nak'azdli village in the background.*

We value your comments and suggestions. Your input is a vital part of our program development.

Please take a moment to fill in a visitor comment card and sign our guest book located in the Visitor Reception Centre.

Fort St James National
Historic Site

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Each National Park, National Historic Site and Canal, including conservation areas within in the Parks Canada family tells a very unique story...

“Long ago, they never go by thermometer; they just go by animals. That’s what they used to do. The beavers come out in the spring; this is when they come out. Sometimes, if they were seen to open their dams wide, it would mean that it would be a wet summer. But if they don’t open their dams, and the beaver fixes the dam right away, it meant that it would be a dry summer. Things like that, the old people watched out for. And in the late fall, if the beaver gathered its food early, it meant a cold winter ahead or a long winter.”

*Nak’azdli Elder, Betsy Leon
from “Nak’azdli Elders Speak”*

Long before Alexander Mackenzie came west of the Rocky Mountains in search of a navigable route to the Pacific Ocean, the Nak’azdli had their home here. Part of the Dakelh or Carrier people, the Nak’azdli nation depended mainly on the salmon for sustenance over the long winters. It was in their territory that Simon Fraser built the first trading post, Stuart Lake Outpost, in 1806. The post formed an important part of the North West Company’s expansion west of the Rocky Mountains.

Simon Fraser, John Stuart and those that accompanied them, found this area rich in all kinds of fur-bearing animals. Once established, the post became an important trading place for the Dakelh.

Stuart Lake Outpost was renamed Fort St. James in 1821 with the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. What you see is the fourth building phase of the Fort in its original location. As a place for trade, the post was alive and active until 1952.

Today, local natural resources are still used for the lively-hood of the economy, whether in a traditional or modern sense. The Dakelh and others hunt, fish, pick berries, etc. to help sustain themselves over the winter months. And many people find work in the forestry and tourism industries.

Costumed historic interpreters are on site to share the history of the fort and surrounding area from June 1st to September 30th.

Historic buildings will be closed from 12:00 pm to 12:45 pm. During this time, we invite you to join one of our interpreters in the Hide Tanning Shed for a special program.



