

Conant Living History Encampment

For more than a decade, the **Wapiti Trading Company** has offered a historical encampment at Spring Valley Nature Center for Conant High School's Juniors. With the assistance of the Social Studies Department, support from the principalship and financial support from the Booster Club, this field trip has continued to be a valuable educational experience for Conant students.

The field trip, originally the idea of Conant Counselor Chuck Williams (picture immediately below) and then Social Studies Department Chairman Ron Szymanski, has evolved into a fall tradition as students are exposed to life on the American frontier during the 1750's.



Charles Parker (*retired Conant Counselor Chuck Williams*) came to the colonies from Scotland in 1746 as an indentured servant. After fighting in the French and Indian war, he moved west with his daughter and harbors a deep distrust of the British. He runs a tavern on the frontier, where the liquor is always watered down. A traditional highlight of the encampment is the marrying off of his daughter to unsuspecting young men.



Molly Brandt holds a seat on the women's council of the Mohawk Tribe. Her father is a wealthy white man who is the Head of Indian Affairs for the British. She is the sister of Chief Joseph Brandt, the war chief of the Iroquois Nation. Her stories of creation of the earth, and its people, was one of the highlights of the encampment.



Joseph O'Fallon came from France and made a living as a fur trapper. His marriages to native women gave him a warm home in the cold winter months. He is indeed prone to being a bit cold. **Father Nicholas** came to the Illinois Territory as a Jesuit priest from France in 1750.



Captain John Ira Parke was born in Prussia and found employment as a surveyor in the Louisiana territory of New France. He particularly enjoys political discussions at the local tavern and has run up quite a bill at that establishment. He is quite concerned about both the water content of the liquor as well as the large extent of "rice" in the stew. **Daniel is a leather crafter** who provides such products as saddles, pouches, belts and leather flasks.



Jeffrey Thorpe is a sailor who came to the colonies after taking up with river pirates. He helps out at the trading post, and can always be counted on for interesting stories as to where he obtained the items he is selling. Where did those holes in the coat come from?