Teacher Resource Information:
The Mountain Man Rendezvous

The rendezvous was developed to save mountain men and fur trade companies time and money. Before the rendezvous was established, mountain men would have to deliver their furs and get new supplies at the company base or outpost. These could be hundreds to thousands of miles from where the mountain men were trapping. Establishing the rendezvous at the heart of where the mountain men were trapping allowed them to deliver their furs and buy supplies. The first rendezvous was held in 1825 at Henry's Fork of the Green River. The Rendezvous was held annually from 1825 through 1840. Two rendezvous were held in Cache Valley and two were held at the south end of Bear Lake. The remaining rendezvous were held in southwestern Wyoming.

Mountain men looked forward to the rendezvous. In addition to receiving payment for pelts and trade for necessary supplies, they would also trade with traders and Native Americans for items such as beads, horses, weapons, and utensils. The rendezvous was also a time for mountain men to gather for social events, meet with friends and business associates, have a good time, drink, and play. They had horse races, leg races, target shooting (although not a lot because they didn't want to waste lead or powder), card games, dominoes, and gambling. They would sometimes even exchange books to read during the long winter months.

Example of supplies for a rendezvous

Gunpowder, Lead, Shot
Blankets, Cloth
Butcher Knives
Kettles, Pans
Squaw axes
Beaver traps
Sugar, Coffee, Flour, Allspice, Raisins
Flannels, Calicoes, and domestic cotton
Thread
Finger rings, Bracelets
Beads
Vermillion
Files
Rum
Bridles, Spurs, Horse shoes and nails
Hand kerchiefs
Ribbons, Buttons
Looking glasses
Flints
Moccasin
Iron Buckles
Fire steels
Dried fruit
Washing soap, Shaving soap
Steel, Large Brass wire

Sources:

- American West Heritage Center's Research Files
- William H. Ashley, Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette. Articles of Agreement, July 18, 1826,
- http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/artagree.html
- http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/trappers,_traders,_and_explorers/traderstrappersandmountianmen.html