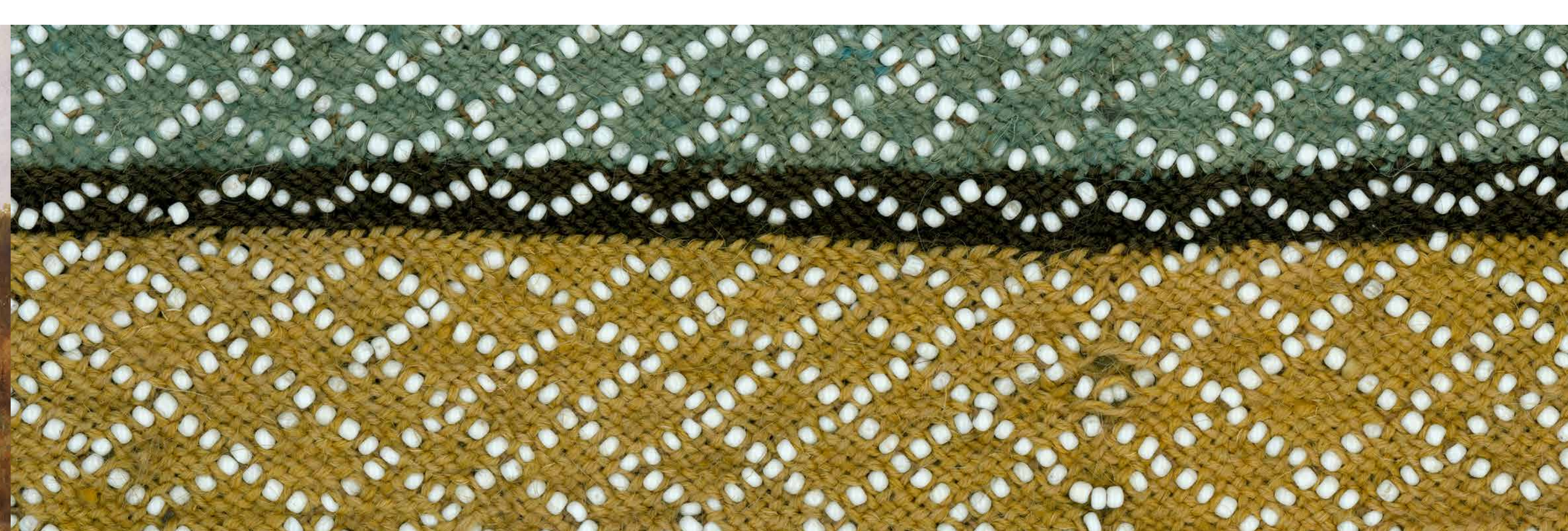




Courtesy Thomson Collection



Dennis Gale, *Portaging a Canoe*, 1860

Trade goods and supplies were packed into bundles called pieces. A piece weighed about 90 pounds and was shaped for portaging (carrying canoe and cargo overland) and compact storage in a canoe.

Cornelius Krieghoff, *Indians in the Employ of the Hudson's Bay Company at a Portage*, 1858

# Try to lift this pack.

## Careful—it weighs 45 pounds.

At least once during every trip, voyageurs would have to portage. That means they had to carry their fully loaded canoes past rapids or falls, or to the next big lake. A voyageur would hoist one, two, or even three packs onto his back—and each one was **TWICE** as heavy as this one!



**WOW:** One portage, from Lac du Flambeau in present-day Wisconsin to Lake Superior, was an amazing 45 miles long. Can you imagine carrying 90 pounds or more on your back all that way?

There were two types of voyageurs: the pork-eaters and the winterer. The pork-eaters paddled the large Montreal canoes loaded with goods from Montreal to Grand Portage. In August they made the long trip back to Montreal loaded down with furs. They were called pork-eaters because of their daily diet of salt pork and dried peas. Winterers spent the winter at the post exchanging trade goods for furs.

Bark canoes were light enough to carry, yet strong enough to hold heavy loads. And if it needed repairs, you could gather the necessary materials in the woods.

