

(#4) Economic activities, trade networks, waterways

Document collection for student site page [Economic activities, trade networks, waterways](#)

Exploring essential questions like: *What was life like before the arrival of the Europeans?*



[Men travelled lightly so that they go hunting at a moment's notice] © Création Bernard Duchesne via [Algonquian Men – Societies and Territories](#)

Learning Intentions	Success Criteria
To know the economic activities practiced by indigenous peoples.	I can name the economic activities practiced by indigenous peoples.
To describe trade relationships.	I can name products and describe the trade networks and reasons why trade occurred.
To explain the importance of waterways.	I can explain the importance of waterways in indigenous peoples' trade networks.



>> OVERVIEW

Through an examination, comparison and analysis of the documents below, and the people, facts and stories around them, students will develop a response to the guiding questions like: *What was life like before the arrival of the Europeans?* They will consider these questions in terms of life during the period of 1500-1608.

>> GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The documents below are collected to support basic learning intentions listed in various colours. These learning intentions are drawn directly from the “historical knowledge” and the specific “knowledge to be acquired” in the provincial program. They are to be covered in one to three class periods including preparatory reading/viewing and follow up exercises. (Note: A flipped-classroom approach could be used here, where the teachers uses these materials to prepare a content overview, video, Powerpoint, etc. For practical examples of how to use these types of document collections: [Go to page](#)) A few sample learning strategies will be *suggested*. Occasionally learning strategies and discussion questions are also noted in the specific documents themselves.



>> ACTIVITY SCENARIO (s)

Activity scenarios have not yet been developed for this document collection,

... though some questions and activity suggestions may have been occasionally inserted in the “document page” itself. Activity scenarios built to address the above “Learning Intentions” should develop one or more key features of the competencies

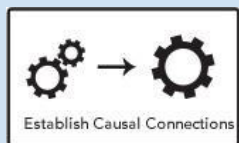
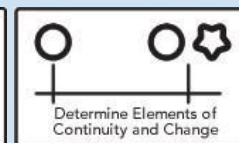
Competency 1: Characterizes a period

- Establish historical facts: Retraces events; Considers aspects; Identifies actors; Identifies actions
- Considers geographical features: Determine limits of a territory; Identifies natural features; Identifies evidence of the settlement of a territory
- Establishes a chronology: Refers to reference points; Establish a sequence

Competency 2: Interprets a social phenomenon

- Defines object of interpretation: Identifies context; Considers aspects; Formulates tentative explanations
- Analyzes social phenomenon: Establish causes and continuities; Identifies causes and consequences
- Ensure validity of interpretation: Distinguishes intentions, values, beliefs; Considers other interpretations

Activity scenarios built to address the above “Learning Intentions” should allow for evaluation of one or more of the intellectual operations:



Hook Document discussion

What do the two documents suggest would have been different about the daily life of the two peoples represented?

Algonquian speaking nations.

How important was harvesting?


“White-tailed deer were perhaps one of the most important game animals except in the north, where moose and caribou were the staples. Some coastal peoples hunted seals as well as freshwater fish, eels, molluscs and crustaceans. Waterfowl and land birds were seasonally important in some areas. Fur bearers, especially beaver, were significant to trade-based economies. Peoples in the area gathered and ate a variety of berries, nuts, tubers and plants; and some groups harvested maple and birch sap, and wild rice.”

Source: Bishop, Charles A.. "Eastern Woodlands Indigenous Peoples in Canada". The Canadian Encyclopedia, 21 December 2017, Historica Canada. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/>


Iroquoians grew so much that “Crop storage permitted sedentary and often palisaded settlements”

“Corn, beans and squash, The Three Sisters, were the principal crops of the Iroquois and other Native American groups in the northeastern United States, at the time Europeans arrived here about 1600. By this time, the Iroquois had been planting these three crops together for about 300 years. Corn and beans are not native to this area; they originated in tropical America where they were cultivated by early peoples, long before these crops were cultivated in the northeastern United States. Pumpkins and similar types of squash have a tropical origin, as well.”

Source: [The Three Sisters exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/iroquoisvillage/sistersone.html](http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/iroquoisvillage/sistersone.html)



[Algonquian speakers harvesting wild rice] © Diane Boily / Éducatif-UQTR site, AKI: Sociétés et Territoires autochtones (See <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/wild-rice/>)



Iroquoians growing the “three sisters”: corn, squash and beans] © New York State Museum <http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/iroquoisvillage/>



Learning Intentions

To know the economic activities practiced by indigenous peoples.

Success Criteria

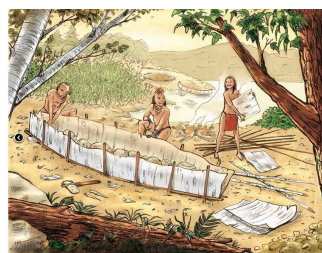
I can name the economic activities practiced by indigenous peoples.

Algonquian peoples of eastern woodlands

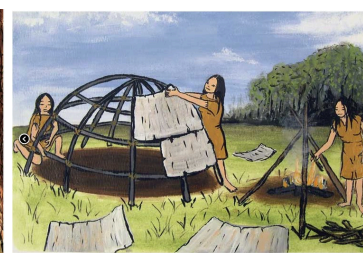
“The Algonquian people of the Eastern Woodlands were hunter-gatherers, meaning they relied on collecting edible plants and hunting wild animals as their main source of food. ...They were too far north to rely solely on horticulture; however, some groups did farm. The Mi'kmaq's grew tobacco. Ottawa, Abenaki, and Algonquin grew corn, beans, and squash.... They spent a lot of time fishing, particularly in the St. Lawrence area, the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic coast.”

“Most tools that the Eastern Woodlands Hunters used were made of wood or bark. For hunting larger animals they used bows and arrows and lances, and for smaller animals they used traps, snares, and deadfalls. For fishing, they used hooks, weirs, leisters, and nets, all of which they made themselves from forest material. Cooking was done in containers made of wood and bark, mainly from birch trees.”

Source, more information and images at
http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_wh3.html



(Building a canoe) © Jean-Paul Gauthier / Centre d'histoire de Montréal



(Building wigwams was women's work) © Claire Boly / Éducalo (CCTN) snc. AMI. Sociétés et Territoires autochtones



(Preparing skins to make clothing) © Claire Boly / Éducalo (CCTN) snc. AMI. Sociétés et Territoires autochtones

Tomahawk

Pecan

Mocassin

Toboggan

Wapiti



Images from Algonquian Image Gallery at [Algonquian Image Bank – Societies and Territories](http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_wh3.html)



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Early Trading Networks Basics:

"In prehistoric Canada trade goods moved over long distances along well-established routes that, in some cases, were used for thousands of years. The perishable and semi-perishable items that were the bulk of this trade have virtually disappeared from the archaeological record. The trade goods that have survived usually made of stone, metal, shell, or mineral – were often transported hundreds or even thousands of kilometres from their source. Siliceous stone, suitable for flaking into tools, is the most common trade material at archaeological sites.

Trade goods were usually finished products. Most of them were probably traded between neighbouring peoples as trade was combined with the seasonal rounds of hunting and fishing. An item may have been exchanged many times as it moved from its source to the site where it was recovered. Wherever it took place, trade was integrated with local economies that provided for most subsistence needs."

Source: canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/themes.aspx?id=earlytrade&sub=earlytrade_basics_introduction&lang=En

"In the Ontario peninsula trade in native goods took place long before direct European contact and continued alongside trade in European goods until the population dispersals of the late 1640s. It was most active between the fishing and hunting bands of the Canadian Shield and the village agriculturalists farther south.

Distant trade through intermediaries brought sea shells (wampum) and native copper to the southern Great Lakes."

Source: Great Lakes Basin at

The Canadian Atlas Online - Early trade networks - Historical Atlas of Canada

Ex. Copper traded extensively:



Early trade networks (Obsidian Trade). Part of old animation originally available via The Canadian Atlas Online - Early trade networks - Historical Atlas of Canada



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Algonquians and copper

Northern Algonquians:

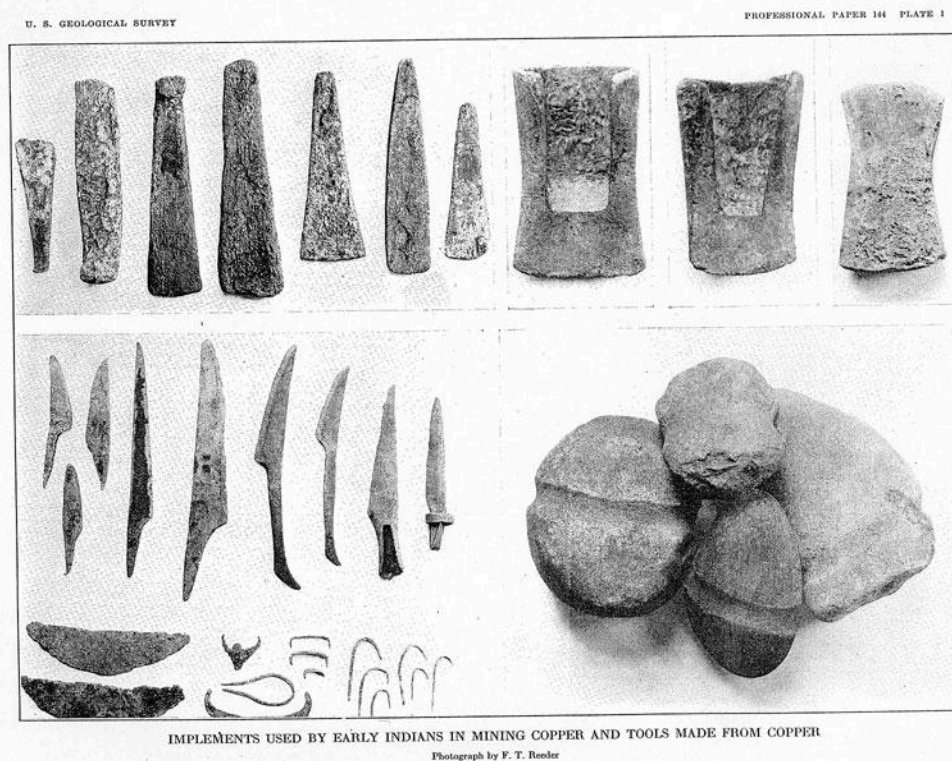
Archaeological sites on Morrison Island near [Pembroke](#), within the territory of the later *Kitcisipiriniwak*, reveal a 1,000-year-old culture that manufactured [coppertools](#) and weapons. Copper ore was extracted north of [Lake Superior](#) and distributed down to today's northern [New York](#). Local pottery artifacts from this period show widespread similarities that indicate the continuing use of the river for cultural exchange throughout the [Canadian Shield](#) and beyond.

Source: [Algonquin people - Wikipedia](#)

Southern Algonquians:

"It can be argued that Algonquians prized copper and copper ornaments above all other objects. Copper ornaments signified status in Algonquian society and were worn and perhaps controlled by werowances, who bestowed copper beads and pendants on accomplished warriors and used copper to decorate the carved representations of the god Okeus kept in their temples. In their first forays along the Carolina coast, the English quickly became aware of the value of this commodity to the Algonquians and brought cut pieces of sheet copper with them on subsequent voyages. European copper quickly flooded the market, however, and just a few years after the founding of Jamestown John Smith found Powhatan more willing to trade for corn than for copper. Sites occupied in the Late Woodland/Early Contact period thus offer the opportunity to study the changing value of copper in Algonquian society. "

Source: [Site - 44JC803 - copper](#) at [virtualjamestown.org/paspaheqh/copper.html](#)



Source: U.S. Geological Survey [List of Illustrations PP 144](#) at [www.minsocam.org/](#)
Copyright status unknown. [Primary Document File]



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Old World Goods via Asia and the North?

Yukon trading from the East?!

“Chinese connected with Yukon First Nations through Russian and coastal Tlingit traders during the late 17th and 18th centuries and possibly as early as the 15th century, according to a release from Western Copper and Gold. “

Source: [300-Year-Old Chinese Coin Found In North Of Canada at archaeologynewsnetwork](#)



This coin found in Yukon on the historic Dyea to Fort Selkirk trade route was minted between 1667 and 1671 during China's Qing Dynasty [Credit: James Mooney/Ecofor Consulting Ltd] [Source](#)

Dorset/Inuit and Beothuk: Did they trade with the Vikings!?



“The Viking seafarers who explored the North American coast a thousand years ago likely searched, as Ohthere did, for trading partners. In Newfoundland, a region they called Vinland, the newcomers met with a hostile reception. The indigenous peoples there were well armed and viewed the foreigners as intruders on their land. But in Helluland small nomadic bands of Dorset hunters may have spotted an opportunity and rolled out the welcome mat. They had few weapons for fighting, but they excelled at hunting walruses and at trapping fur-bearing animals, whose soft hair could be spun into luxurious yarn. Moreover, some researchers think the Dorset relished trade. For hundreds of years they had bartered avidly with their aboriginal neighbors for copper and other rare goods. “They may have been the real entrepreneurs of the Arctic,” says Sutherland.”

Source: Vikings and Native Americans by Heather Pringle originally at [ngm.nationalgeographic.com/](#) now via [http://web.archive.org/...pringle-text](#)

“There is evidence of Norse trade with the natives (called Skraelings by the Vikings). The Norse would have encountered both Native Americans (the Beothuk, related to the Algonkians) and the Thule, ancestors of the Inuit. The Dorset had withdrawn from Greenland before the Norse settlement of the island. Items such as comb fragments, pieces of iron cooking utensils and chisels, chess pieces, ship rivets, carpenter's planes, and oaken ship fragments used in Inuit boats have been found far beyond the traditional range of Norse colonization. There has also been a small ivory statue found among the ruins of an Inuit community house that appears to represent a European” Source: Wikipedia at [Norse colonization of North America](#)



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Trade between peoples, nearby and far away!

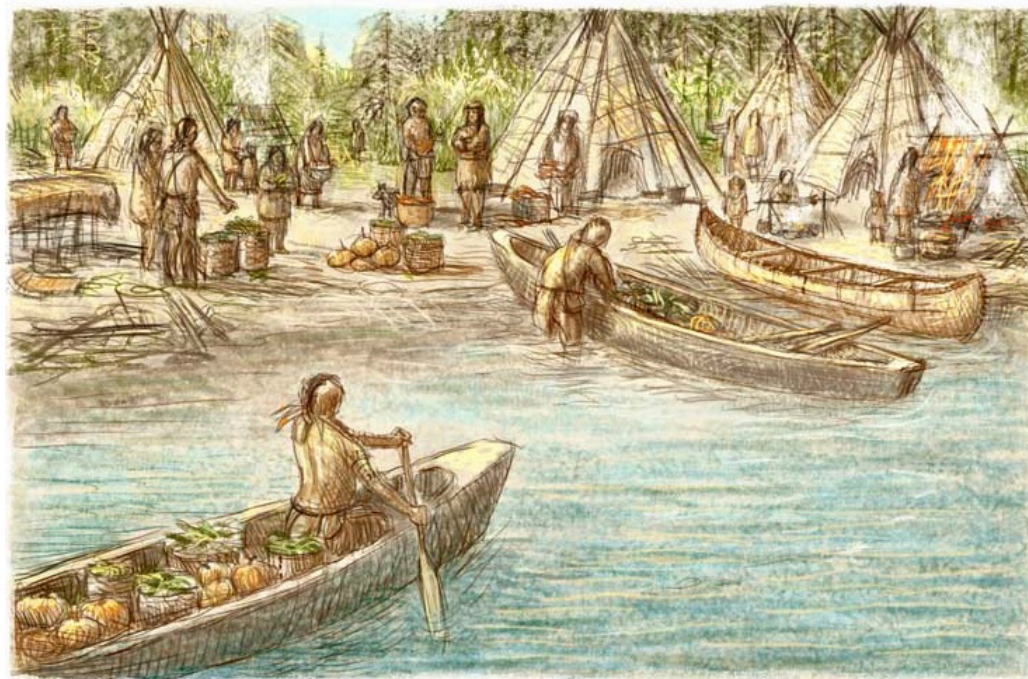
“Since transportation at the time was limited to walking, snowshoeing and canoeing, it's hard to imagine that the Indigenous peoples of the different nations were able to travel long distances to trade goods. And yet they did travel far, even in the 1500s.

Materials and resources were different, according to the region inhabited by each different nation. By trading, each nation was able to obtain the goods and resources they could not find or make on their own territory. For example, the Huron could trade the corn they grew in large quantities for dried fish from the Algonquins. In this way, every nation benefitted.

Want another example? When Jacques Cartier took Donnacona to France in 1535, he noticed that the chief had a copper knife. But copper was not found in the Québec City region where the chief lived. In fact, there was only one place where copper was found: near Lake Superior. Look at the distance between Lake Superior and Québec City on a map; you'll notice that they are very far apart. So how did the St. Lawrence Iroquoians obtain copper objects? Through a network of trades.

Trading usually took place in the summer, when it was easier to travel long distances. These were times of celebration for Indigenous peoples. Nations that belonged to a confederation, like the Huron and the Five Nations, made trading easier.”

Source RECITUS via: [Bartering: trading between nations – Societies and Territories](#)



The Algonquians and Iroquoians traded the goods they needed © Création Bernard Duchesne

“Even before the arrival of Europeans, trade between neighbouring Eastern Woodlands Algonquian groups was common. Beaver furs were very important in trade. There was also trade between the Iroquois and Algonquians. For example, the Nipissing weren't farmers themselves, but they traded fish for Huron corn.”

Source: [Tribal Relations at firstpeoplesofcanada.com/](#)

“There is also evidence of trade in food. Natives hunted bison on the Great Plains almost from their arrival in the Americas. ...starting about two thousand years ago, there is evidence of production of meat for trade.”

Source: [Exchange among Native Americans and Europeans before 1800 Strategies and Interactions. by Ann M. Carlos](#)



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Gift Giving between aboriginal societies

(See also [LEARN Doc Collection - \(#2\) Spiritual Practices, Oral Tradition, Goods and Gifts](#))

“Although natives have not been viewed as market oriented, evidence has been accumulating that some groups engaged in sophisticated trade. Their exchange mechanisms included reciprocity and redistribution, which played a much greater role than in western societies. Indeed, universal among the aboriginals of North America was an ethic of generosity. Marcel Mauss defines gift-giving as equal exchange between symmetrically placed individuals or groups. Gifts received in one year are expected to be returned in another. Thus, gifts were a form of saving for the giver and borrowing for the receiver.”

Source: [Exchange among Native Americans and Europeans before 1800 Strategies and Interactions](#)

“The Iroquois used **present-giving** more often than any other mode of exchange. Present-giving reflected the **reciprocity** in Iroquois society. The exchange would begin with one clan giving another tribe or clan a present with the expectation of some sort of needed commodity being given in return. This form of trade ties to the Iroquois culture's tendency to share property and cooperate in labor. In all cases no explicit agreement is made, but one service is performed for the community or another member of the community's good with the expectation that the community or another individual would give back” Source: [Economy of the Iroquois](#)

“Algonquian-speaking Virginia Indians during the Late Woodland Period (AD 900–1650) practiced a gift-exchange economy. All Indians were required to give, accept, and, at a later date, reciprocate; failure to do so could lead to punishments of varying kinds.”

Source: [Gift Exchange in Early Virginia Indian Society – Encyclopedia Virginia](#)



Iroquois with Western goods, presumably acquired through trade
[Economy of the Iroquois](#) at en.wikipedia.org [Primary Document File]



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Gift-giving: A strong belief in the principle of reciprocity

“In Ojibwe country, the fur trade was based on indigenous ideas of reciprocity and kinship. Gift-giving lay at the heart of it all. Ojibwe people had a strong belief in the principle of reciprocity that applied to different kinds of beings. When they hunted, fished, or gathered plants, Ojibwe people reciprocated with the natural world by giving something back. For smaller items, people often left a gift of tobacco. In other cases, such as the killing of a bear, they held an elaborate ceremony of thanks and gave presents. This created a culture of generosity among the Ojibwe. For example, rather than store up food for personal use, Ojibwe families would give it to others. Gift-giving created bonds between families and helped turn strangers or enemies into kin or allies.

This belief in reciprocity resulted in large-scale gift-giving within the fur trade. The Ojibwe and the traders practiced a lot of ritual gift-giving during the fur trade season as a way to foster good relations and maintain business ties. The traders picked up the symbolic meaning of gift giving from the Ojibwe. They exchanged gifts in the fall, and traders gave trade goods on credit to Ojibwe clients. In the springtime, traders collected furs and skins as a general settlement for the credit. The Ojibwe liked to show their trustworthiness after being extended credit because they took reciprocal material relationships seriously.”

Source: [Gift-giving Practices | Snake River Fur Post | MNHS](#)



Image source: [Bandolier bag Anonyme - Anonymous Eastern Woodlands Aboriginal: Anishinaabe \(Chippewa\) 1865-1900 M1555 © McCord Museum](#) Under [by-nc-nd/](#)

“BANDOLIER BAG Fashioned exclusively from European materials and adorned with thousands of beads, bandolier bags were primarily for show, as a symbol of identity, wealth, and status. Sometimes called “friendship bags,” they were often created as gifts to strengthen relationships within communities or between nations. Both men and women wore them, usually at ceremonies and celebrations. The wearing of more than one bag was generally the prerogative of a leader or a person of high honour.” Source: [Wearing our Identity. The First Peoples Collection - McCord Museum](#) [Primary Document File]



Learning Intentions

To explain the importance of waterways.

Success Criteria

I can explain the importance of waterways in indigenous peoples' trade networks.

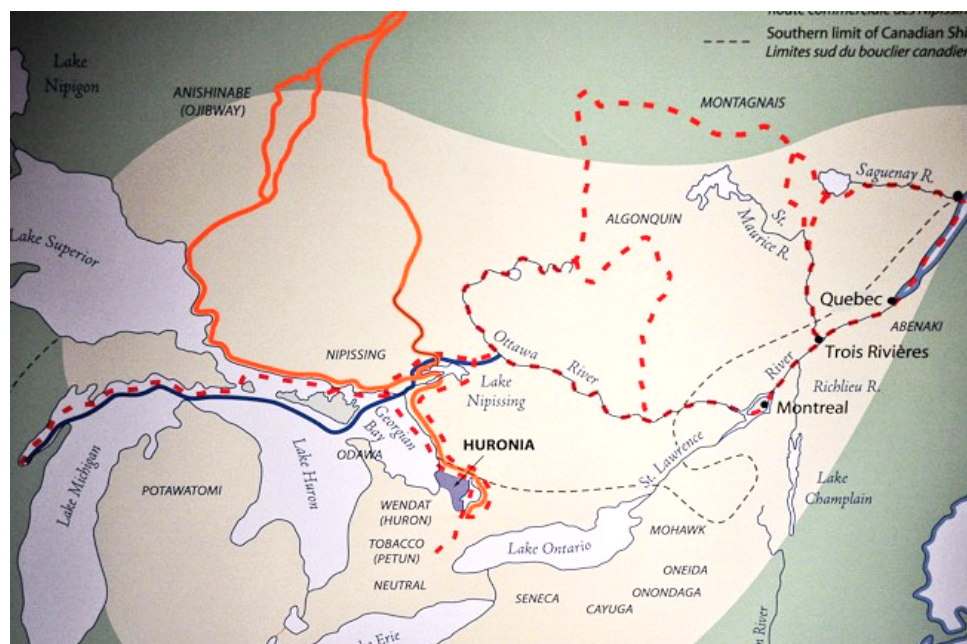
Well defined paths!

“They used well-defined routes of travel, for going on hunting trips and on the war-path. They made use of the waterways wherever possible and used portage paths to avoid rapids.”

Source: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_travel.html

For Historical period, read Fur Trade Routes

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/m/article/fur-trade-routes/>



Source: <http://frontierbushcraft.com/2012/10/09/canadian-canoe-museum/>

Photo: Ray Goodwin.



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