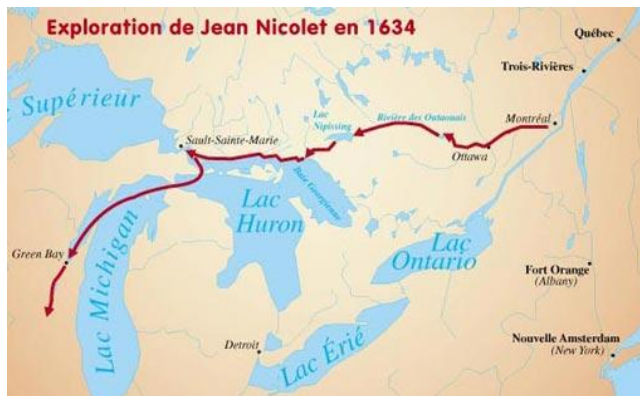
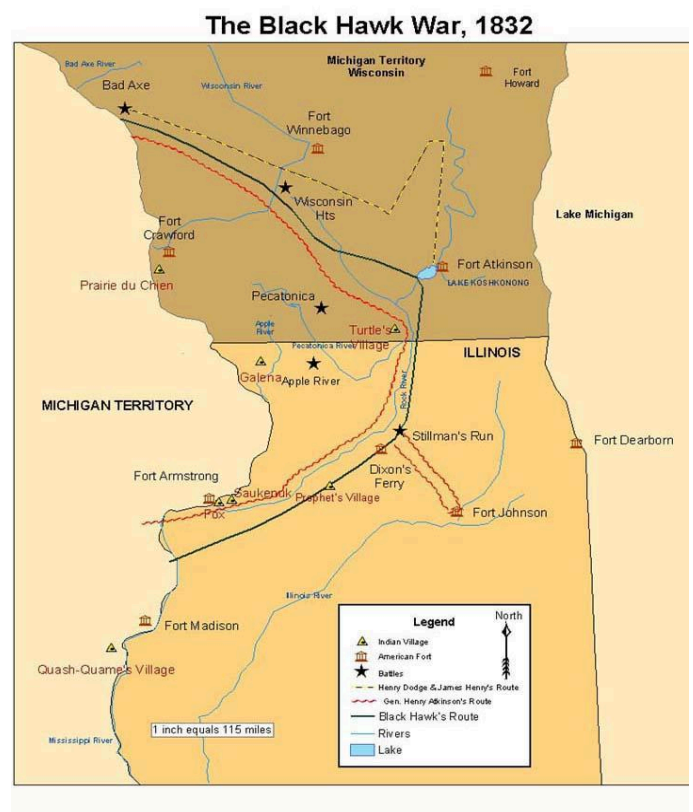
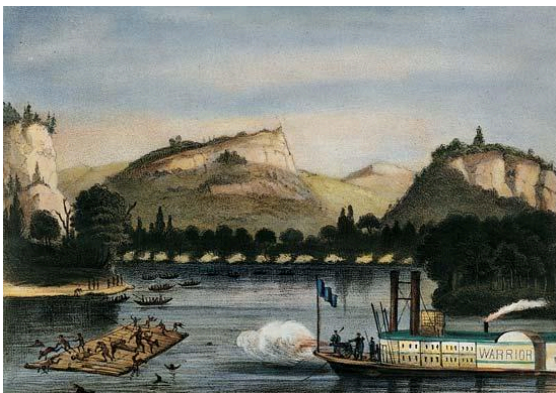


Before the Europeans settled in what is now Wisconsin, American Indians inhabited the area. Evidence suggests that they arrived here more than 10,000 years ago. They lived in villages and planted gardens to grow crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They had a complex trade network that extended to both the Atlantic and the Gulf coasts. They lived off the land, farming, hunting and gathering, and maintained strong family ties and cultural traditions within their respective tribes. However, the presence of European settlers drastically altered their way of life



They saw their first white settlers with the arrival of French fur traders. The first was **Jean Nicolet** and the missionary **Jacques Marquette** near the Red Banks in 1634. During this time, fur was the main focus and fur traders and missionaries worked with the American Indians to achieve their objectives for over 150 years. However, this changed when settlers came to Wisconsin. America began to expand west to make room for the incoming settlers, without regard to the lives of American Indians.

In 1804, the government forced the Sauk and Fox tribes to cede their land claims in southern Wisconsin in a treaty they had not agreed to. These actions led to the Black Hawk War of 1832. Between August 1 and 2, the Battle of Bad Axe occurred between the Sauk and Fox Indians and the United States Army. It marked the end of the war between white settlers and the Sauk and Fox tribes under warrior Black Hawk.





## Jean Nicolet (Nicollet)



Jean Nicolet, a French *coureur des bois* (French hunters and traders), was born in 1598 in Cherbourg, France. He was a known friend of **Samuel De Champlain**, the first explorer of the Americas and founder of Québec, the first French settlement. He was attracted to Canada in 1618 to participate in Samuel's plan to train young French men as explorers and traders by having them live among the American Indians. The French were setting up fur trading under the *Compagnie des Marchands* (Goods Company).

Jean Nicolet was sent to live with the Algonquins on Allumette Island, a friendly settlement located along the Ottawa River fur trade route. In 1620, he was assigned to live among the Odawa and Algonquin people in Lake Nipissing region where he ran a store. On July 19, 1629 when Quebec fell to the English, Jean Nicolet fled to the Huron country. He worked there against the English until the French were restored to power.

In 1634, Jean Nicolet became the first European to explore what would become Wisconsin. Jean Nicolet landed at Red Banks, near modern-day Green Bay, Wisconsin, in search of a passage to the Orient. Nicolet founded a small trading post here, originally named *La Baye* or *La Baie des Puants* (the stinking bay). He and other French explorers had learned from their native contacts that the people who lived along these shores were called *Ho-Chunk*, which the French translated as "People of the Sea". In their language, it meant Nicolet concluded that the people contact with China



Nicolet became the French ambassador to the Ho-Chunk people. He wore brightly colored robes and carried two pistols, to convey his authority. The Ho-Chunk people appreciated his ritual display. With some Ho-Chunk guides, Nicolet ascended the Fox River, portaged to the Wisconsin River, and travelled down it until it began to widen. So sure was he that he was near the ocean, that he stopped and went back to Quebec to report his discovery of a passage to the "South Sea," unaware that he had just missed finding the upper Mississippi River.





A few months after Nicolet returned to Quebec, Champlain died. His death halted other journeys to *La Baie Verte* (Green Bay). As Great Britain took control of French areas during the **Seven Years' War**, known as the **French and Indian War** or **La guerre de la Conquête** (War of the Conquest), this town came under British control in 1761. The war was fought between the colonies of British America and New France, with both sides supported by military units from their parent countries of Great Britain and France, as well as Native American allies. The French ceded their North American lands East of the Mississippi River to the British following defeat in 1763.

The first permanent French settlers were **Charles de Langlade** and his family from Canada, who moved to Green Bay in 1765, becoming the first European-American settlers in today's Wisconsin. Langlade, called the "Founder and Father of Wisconsin", was an Ottawa war chief with a French father. He is credited with planning the ambush of British General Braddock and George Washington in the French and Indian War. The Grignons, Porliers and Lawes, who followed, brought Canadian-French culture with them.

## Jacques Marquette



Father **Jacques Marquette**, also known as **Père Marquette** was a French Jesuit missionary who founded Michigan's first European settlement, Sault Ste. Marie. In 1673 Father Marquette and Louis Jolliet were the first Europeans to explore and map the northern portion of the Mississippi River.

Jacques Marquette was born in Laon, France, on June 1, 1637. He worked and taught in France for several years before the Jesuits assigned him to New France in 1666 as a missionary to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. He showed great proficiency in learning the local languages, especially Huron. In 1668 Father Marquette was moved by his superiors to missions farther up the St. Lawrence River in the western Great Lakes region. He helped found missions at Sault Ste. Marie in present-day

Michigan in 1668 and at La Pointe, on Lake Superior near Ashland, Wisconsin. At La Pointe he encountered members of the Illinois tribes, who told him about the important trading route of the Mississippi River.





In 1673, Marquette joined the expedition of **Louis Joliet**, a French-Canadian explorer. They departed from St. Ignace on May 17, with two canoes and five voyageurs of French-Indian ancestry (Métis). They followed Lake Michigan to Green Bay and up the Fox River, nearly to its headwaters. From there, they were told to portage their canoes a distance of slightly less than two miles through marsh and oak plains to the Wisconsin River. Many years later, at that point the town of Portage, Wisconsin was built, named for the ancient path between the two rivers. From the portage, they ventured forth, and on June 17, they entered the Mississippi near present-day Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

The Joliet-Marquette expedition traveled to within 435 miles (700 km) of the Gulf of Mexico but turned back at the mouth of the Arkansas River. By this point they had encountered several natives carrying European

trinkets, and they feared an encounter with explorers or colonists from Spain. They followed the Mississippi back to the mouth of the Illinois River, which they learned from local natives provided a shorter route back to the Great Lakes. They reached Lake Michigan near the site of modern-day Chicago.

## Final Note

The first Frenchman to map the entire Mississippi River was **Robert Cavalier de la Salle** in 1682. He claimed all the land drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries for France.

Be careful not to mix up **les voyageurs** with **les coureurs des bois**. Les voyageurs were licensed French men who transported furs along the trade routes. Les coureurs des bois were the Frenchmen who learned the language of the native people and traded with them for the furs. Sometimes they would marry with an indigenous woman. **Etienne Brûlé** was probably the first coureur de bois. He lived with the Hurons and was possibly the first white man to travel all the Great Lakes except Michigan. For some reason, after having lived with the Hurons for years, Brûlé was killed and eaten by them.

Fur trading, however, was the center of the economic system in New France, and the Frenchmen were more interested in this than in settling the new land. The government tried to induce settlers by giving them choice river land. The French were strung out along a lengthy chain of rivers and lakes and by 1763 had managed to settle only 80,000 people from Canada to Louisiana - a stretch of more than 2000 miles. By the same time, and in a much smaller area, the English colonies had more than 1.5 million people.



## LES PERSONNES:

## Jacques Marquette

## Etienne Brûlé

## Charles de Langlade

- [illegible]



B. In your own words, how would you explain to someone why Jean Nicolet is important in Wisconsin's history?

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C. In your own words, how would you explain to someone why Jacques Marquette is important in Wisconsin's history?

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D. In your own words, how would you explain to someone the relationship between the French and the American Indians? Why do you think this relationship existed?

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E. Identify if each statement is true or false.

1. The coureurs des bois traded furs with the American Indians.	T	F
2. Jean Nicolet was the first settler in Wisconsin.	T	F
3. Jacques Marquette established a missionary post at La Pointe.	T	F
4. Jean Nicolet learned the language of the Ho-Chunk.	T	F
5. Charles de Langlade was the first settler in Prairie du Chien.	T	F
6. Jacques Marquette mapped the entire Mississippi River.	T	F
7. The French fought the Indians in the Seven Year War.	T	F
8. Jean Nicolet thought the Ho-Chuck would take him to Asia.	T	F
9. The French were more successful than the British at establishing colonies.	T	F
10. The Mississippi was first crossed at Prairie du Chien.	T	F