

New France around 1645



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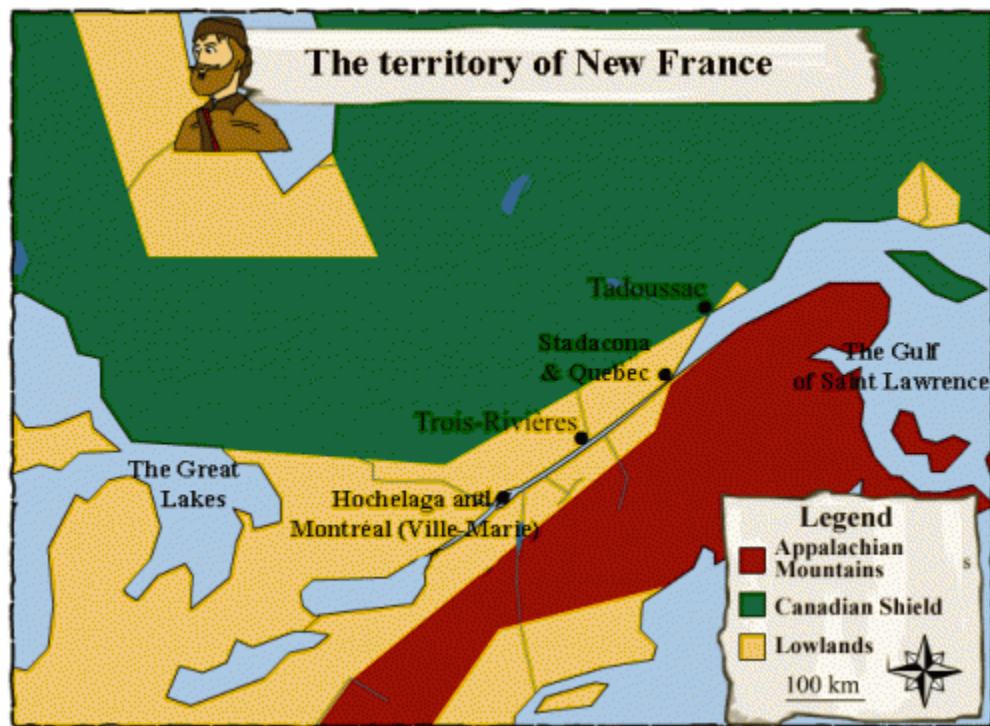
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New France around 1645

[New France around 1645](#)

Welcome to New France, in 1645!





Territory: Growing settlements

Growing settlements

In 1645, the three largest settlements in New France were Québec (later Québec City), (founded in 1608), Trois-Rivières (founded in 1634) and Ville-Marie (later Montréal) (founded in 1642). Although the territory of New France was quite large, the vast majority of the population was concentrated in these three cities, which were all located in the St. Lawrence Valley.

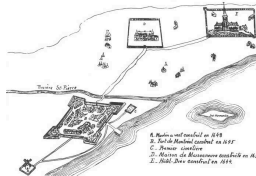
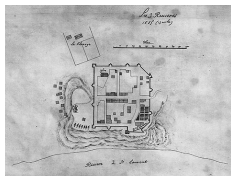
In Québec, the church was being expanded and streets were being made. Québec was becoming a small village. Trois-Rivières was still a very small trading post. Montréal had just been founded and was inhabited by only a few people, including a few missionaries who wanted to convert Indigenous people to the Catholic religion. Montréal's first fort was just being built.

Trading posts

When picking a location to build a settlement in New France around 1645, it was important that the location was good for fur trading. Québec, Trois-Rivières and Montréal were all located in the St. Lawrence Lowlands, near waterways that made it easy to transport goods, like fur, to Europe. These locations were also near Indigenous people, which was helpful for fur trading. Finally, the climate and relief of the land in these areas made it fertile and good for farming.

From small village to big city

The settlements of Québec, Trois-Rivières and Montréal are still around today. What became of them? How have they changed?



Author: Alexandre Lanoix. Adaptions by LEARN.



Population: Fewer than 1000 people

[Fewer than 1000 people](#)

Québec, 1645

Your Lordship,

I have been the governor of New France for several years now and I am discouraged to see that there are so few of us here. Most of the colonists have settled in the St. Lawrence Valley, near Québec, Trois-Rivières and Montréal. Outside these areas there are very few people. Since there are seven times more men than women in New France, it is difficult for these men to find a wife and start a family so that they can settle here permanently.

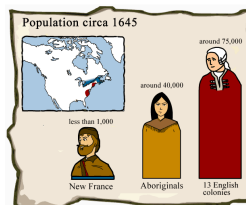
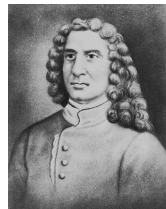
Most of the inhabitants in New France live near fur trading posts because this is the main source of work in the colony. The territory is large but we cannot settle all of it because there are so few of us. Also, most of the inhabitants are engagés (contract labourers) and many of them return to France after a few months or years of work.

It has been almost 40 years since Québec was founded, but the colony is not growing quickly enough. Indigenous Peoples and the British greatly outnumber us (French), so we are vulnerable to attacks and invasion. We desperately need colonists to populate and develop the colony!

Charles Huault de Montmagny, governor of New-France.

Did you know?

It is hard to know how many people lived in Canada in 1645. That's because a census had not been taken that year. However, we do know that there were 250 inhabitants in 1641 and 2000 in 1653. Using these numbers, we can estimate how many people lived in Canada in 1645.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix. Translation and adaption by LEARN.



Prominent individuals: Samuel de Champlain

[Samuel de Champlain](#)

If you ask people who Samuel de Champlain was, many will say he founded the city of Québec in 1608. And they're right. Québec was the first francophone city in North America, which is why so many people in the province of Québec remember Champlain today.

But that's not all Champlain did: for over 30 years, he helped expand New France. Just imagine: Champlain crossed the Atlantic 20 or so times between 1603, the year of his first voyage, and 1635, the year of his death!

Geographer and cartographer

During his early voyages in New France, Champlain explored the territory. Since he was a geographer, he drew several maps to further people's knowledge of the country. He also identified new territories on his maps. For example, in 1612, he described and drew the Ottawa River for the first time.

Good relations with the Hurons

Champlain always tried to establish good relations with certain Indigenous nations, especially the Huron (Wendat). He even spent an entire winter with them in 1615. The stories he left behind are very valuable because they tell us about the Indigenous ways of life.

The importance of colonizing New France

Champlain also believed that New France needed more settlers. He felt this would improve trade between France and its colony. Most people did not agree with him, however. He had to work very hard to convince them.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Prominent individuals: Jeanne Mance

[Jeanne Mance](#)

Just like Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance's name is still very present in Montréal today. You can find a street, schools, park, and organizations named after her. But this is not the only thing she had in common with him: She was also born in France and helped found the city of Montréal in 1642.

The Hôtel-Dieu

Jeanne Mance was different from the other women of her time because she did not want to marry or become a nun, even though she was very religious. Instead, she wanted to care for the sick. She founded the first hospital in Montréal: the Hôtel-Dieu. She even returned to France three times to seek help for the small colony. During her second trip, she brought back three hospital nuns to help her run the hospital.

Unlike Mr. de Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance remained in Montréal until her death in 1673.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



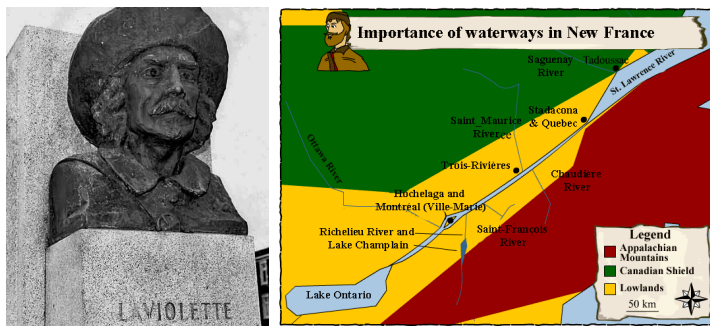
Prominent individuals: Lavolette

[Lavolette](#)

Mr. de Lavolette was the founder of one of the first towns in the province of Québec. Can you guess which one? Here are some hints: Its name begins with a number, it is halfway between Québec City and Montréal, and it is located at the mouth of the Saint-Maurice River, where it splits in two then joins the “third” river, the St. Lawrence river. Look closely at the map if you still aren’t sure. Remember, three in French is “Trois”!

In fact, it was Champlain who noticed during his first trip to New France that this would make the perfect spot for a settlement, particularly for protecting the fur trade route. But it was only 30 years later, in 1634, that he sent Sieur de Lavolette to found the Trois-Rivières trading post.

The year before, the Algonquins of the Trois-Rivières region had come to ask Champlain to build a fort near their territory. Mr. Lavolette commanded this fortified post for two years, from 1634 to 1636. As a result, he was often visited by the Hurons, Algonquins and Montagnais. Lavolette probably returned to France in the summer of 1636.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Prominent individuals: Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve

[Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve](#)

Have you ever visited Old Montréal? Perhaps you've noticed that there is a street there named after St. Paul, in memory of Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve. What did he do to merit such an honour? Well, he was the founder of Montréal, which was called Ville-Marie in 1642.

Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve was born in France. He was a military officer when he was chosen by the Société de Notre-Dame to become the first governor of Montréal. He was 30 years old when he arrived in Ville-Marie, and was accompanied by about 40 colonists.

Settlers wanted

Maisonneuve spent more than 20 years developing the colony, returning to France a few times to seek financial and material assistance and, more importantly, to recruit new settlers. During one trip, in 1653, he managed to bring back about 100 men with him.

He returned to France indefinitely in 1665, where he died 11 years later.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social

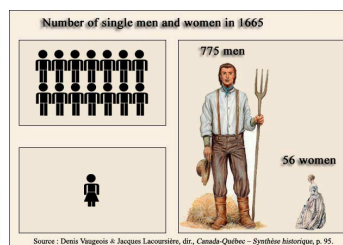
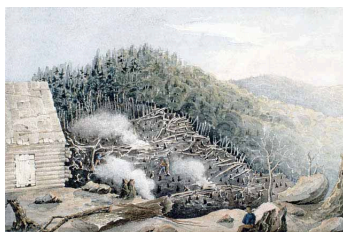


Social Groups: The engagés

[The engagés](#)

My name is Henri Lauson and I am 25 years old. I am what is called an “engagé” (contract labourer). I am a farmhand and have been hired by the Compagnie des Cent-Associés to come and work in Canada. I signed a three-year contract, like most of my friends. In exchange for my work, I receive a small salary, room and board, and transportation by boat.

At the end of my contract, I will have the choice of returning to France or staying here to clear the land where I can build a home and farm. Life is hard in New France. The winters are long and I miss France and my family. Almost all my friends return to France when their contract ends. If I cannot find a woman to marry and start a family with, I will leave too.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



Social groups: Indigenous Peoples around 1645

Indigenous Peoples around 1645

The fur trade

Indigenous people were still an important group in New France around 1645 because they were at the heart of the colony's main economic activity, the fur trade. It was the Indigenous people who hunted animals like beaver and otter and cleaned the skins. They also wore the fur they made for a while. This increased its value because the fur became more resistant and silky over time.

Without these important steps, it would have been very difficult for the French to make any profits from the fur trade. As time passed, the colonists learned how to hunt beaver and so they did less and less business with Indigenous people.

A threatened culture

Although Indigenous people were still an important group in New France, their way of life was being threatened. Firstly, many of them were dying from diseases that had been brought over by the Europeans. What's more, the fur trade was changing their traditional way of life because the men had to leave their families for several days at a time to go hunting. Lastly, some Indigenous people were abandoning their animist religion to adopt the catholic religion of the French. The Indigenous way of life was indeed changing. Sometimes for the better, like when they benefitted from the tools brought over by the Europeans. Sometimes for the worse, like when they died of diseases brought over from Europe.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



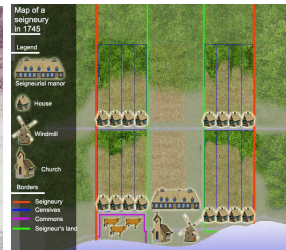
Social Groups: Seigneurs and censitaires

Seigneurs and censitaires

At the time in New France, most people in the colony were only there temporarily to do business, or to work for a while before returning to France. When Robert Giffard founded the Beauport seigneurie in 1634, he became one of the first colonizing seigneurs of New France. The colonists who settled on Giffard's seigneurie were there to start a family and live permanently in the colony. They were not there for the fur trade, which was quite rare at the time.

Relations between the seigneur and the censitaires

A seigneur was someone who ran a large piece of land called a seigneurie. On this land, the seigneur was the boss. He gave out parcels of land to the peasants, who in New France were known as the *habitants*. On a seigneurie, these habitants were tenants called censitaires, and paid the seigneur dues called the cens. They also had to acknowledge the seigneur as the most important person of the seigneurie.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



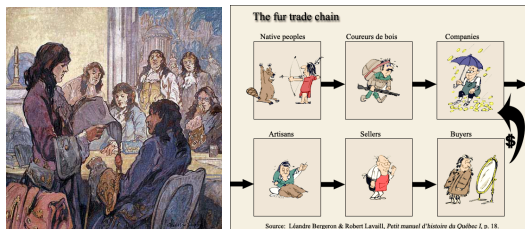
Social Groups: The companies

The companies

In 1627, France created the Compagnie des Cent-Associés (company of one hundred associates). The company was responsible for handling affairs in New France in exchange for having control over the fur trade. It was the only company that was allowed to sell furs from New France. In exchange, the Compagnie des Cent-Associés hired colonists to come and settle in the colony, and pledged to do its best to make sure these settlers stayed in New France and started families.

The origins of the Company

The Compagnie des Cent-Associés was founded in 1627 by the Cardinal de Richelieu. It consisted of one hundred merchants and aristocrats who had been entrusted by the Cardinal to expand the colony. In exchange for having control over the fur trade, the company pledged to bring 4 000 settlers to New France within 15 years. In 1645, the Communauté des Habitants replaced the Compagnie des Cent-Associés because it failed to bring over enough colonists.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Social Groups: Coureurs de bois

Coureurs de bois

In 1645, a new social group was created in New France: the coureurs de bois. Although they were still few in numbers, the coureurs de bois later became an essential element in the fur trade. In the 1660s, there were between 500 and 800 coureurs de bois in the Great Lakes region.

In the early days of colonization, it was the Indigenous people who went to see the French at their trading posts in the St. Lawrence Valley. But over time, more and more Frenchmen were going to see the Indigenous people to trade directly with them. These Frenchmen were called the coureurs de bois.

Who were they?

The coureurs de bois were relatively young men, usually between 20 and 30 years of age, and who were not afraid of danger or physical exertion. They usually set off in the spring, travelling in bark canoes filled with goods to the “Upper Country” of the Great Lakes region. They did not return until the fall. The coureurs de bois bartered. In other words, they used goods as a type of currency to exchange for the furs of Indigenous people. Some only made a few trading trips before settling on a plot of land, while others made it their way of life.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Social Groups: Missionaries

Missionaries

In 1645, the population of New France was catholic and had a number nuns and monks. But religious communities were still scarce at the time. The largest of these communities was the Jesuits, who had been established in the colony since 1625.

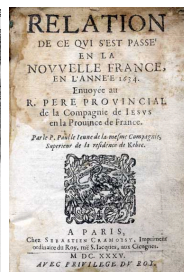
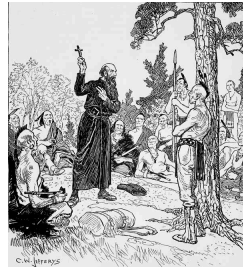
The Jesuits

Jesuits could be found in Québec, Trois-Rivières and Montréal, as well as among the Indigenous nations. They created missions to convert Indigenous people to Catholicism. The Jesuits were particularly active among the Wendats (Hurons). From 1632 to 1672, they published annual accounts of their work in the colony, entitled *Relations*. In addition to their missionary work, they founded a college for boys in the town of Québec in 1635.

The Ursulines and Hospitallers

Two religious communities of women were also present in the colony in 1645: the Ursulines and the Hospitalières de la Miséricorde de Jésus (Hospitallers of the Mercy of Jesus). They arrived in the town of Québec in the same boat in 1639. The Ursulines taught the French and Native populations, while the Hospitallers ran the Hôtel Dieu hospital in Québec.

In later years, other communities such as the Sulpicians and the Recollects would arrive or return to New France.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Daily Life: Life at a trading post

[Life at a trading post](#)

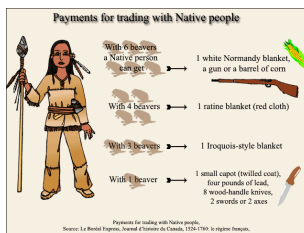
In the early days of colonization, the first settlements along the St. Lawrence River were primarily trading posts. This was the case of Trois-Rivières, which was founded in 1634, but was already known as a trading site. A commander was in charge of the post. A fortified "habitation" was built to provide housing for the inhabitants and to store merchandise.

A trading site

Members of different Indigenous Nations, like the Huron (Wendat), Algonquins and Montagnais, came to the trading sites to barter their furs for European products such as metal axes, swords, blankets, knives, and copper pots.

Relays on the territory

Starting in the 1670s, a large number of trading posts were established further inland, around the Great Lakes. A trading post's location was chosen based on two criteria: firstly, its proximity to navigable waterways for transport, and secondly, its proximity to Indigenous Peoples for fur trading.





Daily Life: Entertainment

Entertainment

How did people entertain themselves in the early days of New France?

Well, we can assume that many stories were told by the fire in the evening, such as the tales of daring deeds or misadventures during an exploration. There was also music, singing and dancing. On August 14, 1636, Father Le Jeune wrote: "... we had some of our young people dance to the sounds of a stringed instrument that a young French boy had" (Relations des Jesuits, vol. IX, p. 268).

Video narration in French at <http://primaire.recitus.qc.ca/sujets/5/vie-quotidienne/111>

We also learn from the the accounts written by the Jesuits that a violin was played at a wedding in 1645, and that at Christmas of that same year, a flute was also played. Maisonneuve, the founder Montréal, happened to be a lute player. Lastly, theatre plays were performed by the pupils of the Jesuits and the Ursulines in Québec.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Daily Life: What's to eat in 1645?

[What's to eat in 1645?](#)

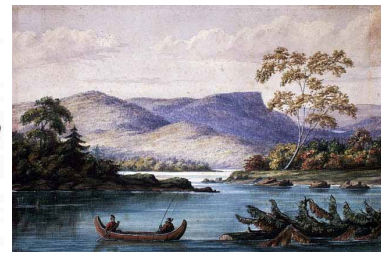
Clearing the land was hard work, the summers were short and the winters were cold, but the habitants (peasants) of New France managed to survive by growing wheat and vegetables. They also discovered new foods like corn, squash and beans.

Hunting and fishing

Hunting and fishing provided enough meat and fish for everyone. Game such as moose, bear and beaver could be found in the many forests surrounding the settlements and throughout the territory of New France. Most of the fishing was done in the Gulf of St Lawrence near Acadia. It provided enough cod to meet the needs of the habitants.

New foods of America

Indigenous peoples introduced the French colonists to many new foods. In addition to vegetables like corn, squash and beans, and meat like moose, bear, and beaver, Indigenous peoples also introduced settlers to maple sap, a sweet liquid they loved. All these foods provided the inhabitants of New France with a more varied diet.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix. Translation and adaptation by LEARN.



Daily Life: Adapting to the colony

[Adapting to the colony](#)

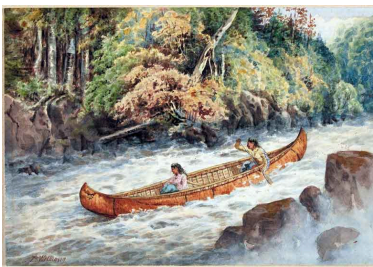
My name is Louis Hébert and people say I am the first farmer in Canada. My crops provide me and family with just enough to eat. I settled in Québec in 1617. At the time, I was one of the few to settle permanently in New France. In 1620, one of my daughters had her first baby, the first French child born in New France!

The Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples

We were lucky that Indigenous Peoples shared some of their knowledge with us; this is helping us survive. For example, we have started using bark canoes to travel on small rivers because they are light. We have also started using snowshoes for walking on snow. Sometimes, we even wear clothing like beaver skin mitts and moccasins. The rest of our clothes are similar to those of the people living in France.

Building a farm

We have to do everything ourselves here. We have to build our own homes, clear our own land and grow our own fruits and vegetables. We have to use whatever money we save to buy tools and animals to run our farm. It's a hard life, but my family and I are very happy!



Author: Alexandre Lanoix. Translation and adaption by LEARN.



Daily Life: The Iroquois war

The Iroquois war

Life was not always rosy for the colonists in the years around 1645. Many difficulties complicated daily life. They had to build, clear the land and adapt to the harsh winter climate. These were also times of conflict and even war. French settlers had to be wary of attacks, in this case by the Iroquois from the south, known as the Haudenosaunee or the Five Nations.

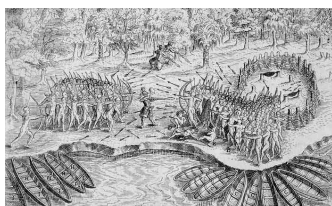
Friends of their enemies were their enemies too!

When the French settled in the St. Lawrence Valley, the Haudenosaunee did not immediately go to war against them. Instead, they went to war against other Indigenous nations like the Algonquins, the Innu (Montagnais), and even the Iroquoian-speaking Wendats (the Huron). Why do you think the Haudenosaunee did that? Well, that is a good question! Let's just say they wanted to protect their hunting territory, and they wanted to be the most important nations in the fur trade. So the French, who were friends with those enemy Algonquin, Innu and Wendat nations also eventually became the enemies of the Iroquois to the south.

Fear in the colony

The forts of Montréal and Trois-Rivières were repeatedly attacked by these Iroquois, which caused the deaths of many colonists. The habitants were afraid to farm the land. To protect themselves, they farmed in groups, some standing guard armed with weapons while the others worked. Fortunately, there were also periods of truce (agreed to pauses) that allowed the colony to grow.

But how did these wars end? Find out by reading about the Great Peace of Montréal.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Language, culture & religion: Adapting to the environment

[Adapting to the environment](#)

The first habitants of New France did not have much time for the arts. These Canadians were too busy settling down, building homes and farming the land. This left little time for artistic expression. Still, the habitants of New France were very creative in everyday life, such as in their architecture.

Architecture

The first colonists in New France built homes that mimicked the architectural style of their home region in France. They usually built small one-room homes that were 13 feet by 14 feet in size (about 4 metres by 4 metres). Every home had a fireplace. The walls were made of wood. During the first year, the roof was made of bark and birch. After the first crop of oats, the roof was covered with straw.

The habitants of New France soon realized that they could not build the same type of homes as those in France because the same materials were not available. They also had to protect themselves from the cold and the humidity. As a result, they had to make a few changes to their homes. For example, they made the roofs much steeper so that the snow and rain could slide off them easily. They also made sealed stone fireplaces that did a much better job of heating their homes. Instead of stone, the habitants generally used wood as their main building material because there were so many trees in New-France.

After a few years, the homes of New France had their own unique style, which was perfectly suited to the climate and to the needs of the habitants.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



Language, culture & religion: Does everyone speak the same French?

[Does everyone speak the same French?](#)

Surprised by this question? You might think that since the colonists were French people who came to live in New France, then they all spoke French. Well, it wasn't so simple. In fact, about one-third of the colonists who came to settle in the St. Lawrence Valley did not speak or understand French. Now you're confused? There's an explanation for this.

In France

In 1645, France was made up of different regions. In many of these regions, the dialect spoken by people was so different from the French of Paris and the other large cities that they simply could not understand one another. This French was like a foreign language to them.

In New France

The same situation occurred in New France: Since not everyone spoke the same dialect, some people from France did not understand the language that was generally used, which was Parisian French. However, during the 17th century, this dialect quickly became the common language of all the French inhabitants of New France. Indigenous People living in New France spoke a variety of different Indigenous languages.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Language, culture & religion: The Catholic religion

[The Catholic religion](#)

At the beginning of the 17th century, Catholicism was the main religion in France. It was not the only religion, however. Some French people were Protestant. But in 1645, anyone who wanted to go to New France had to be Catholic. In Montréal (Ville-Marie), religion played a more important role than elsewhere in New France.

Unlike Québec and Trois-Rivières, which were founded on the fur trade, Montréal was founded for religious interests. Its founders wanted to establish a missionary colony so that they could convert Indigenous people into Catholics. Indigenous Peoples had different spiritual beliefs than the French and British. The new settlement was named Ville-Marie, in honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Many more religious communities would establish in Montréal after 1645.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Agriculture, commerce & industry: Farming

Farming

Farming was very hard work in New France. Often, the people who lived on the land had not been farmers in France. If they wanted to feed their families, though, they had to learn the trade quickly.

Hard work

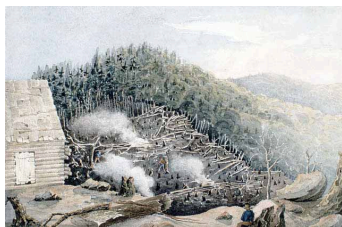
Almost everyone who arrived in New France could have land because so much of it was available. The land where the habitants settled had not been cleared. They had to chop down the trees during their first year so that they could start growing vegetables the following year. Sometimes it took a farmer several years to completely clear his land. The farmers could use the trees they chopped down to build a cabin, and then a house a few years later.

Video narration in French available at

<http://primaire.recitus.qc.ca/sujets/5/agriculture-commerce-et-industrie/116>

Family farming

Farming in New France only produced enough to feed the family. This means there was no surplus to sell in the village market. The habitants often had large families with five or six children. When the children were old enough, they worked on the farm. The habitants mainly grew wheat for making bread, along with a few vegetables like corn, cucumber and pumpkin.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



Agriculture, commerce & industry: The fur trade

The fur trade

At the heart of the colony's development

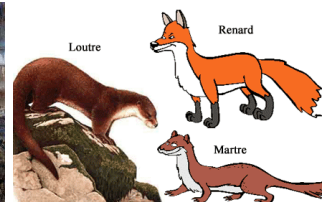
The entire development of New France revolved around the fur trade: from explorations and populating the first settlements, to trading and forming alliances with Indigenous Nations. The large beavers populations were a huge resource in New France because they enabled the development of the fur trade.

Why fur?

The French wanted furs to make felt hats, which were very fashionable in Europe at the time. Felt is made from beaver fur. In Europe, beavers had been so over hunted that they were becoming extinct. The French preferred the fur from beavers that had been hunted in the winter because it was silkier and more beautiful. This type of fur was called winter fat beaver and was the most expensive fur of all. In addition to beaver, other fur-bearing animals were also popular, such as otter, marten and fox.

A network of trades

It was the Indigenous peoples who provided the French with furs. They were the ones who hunted the animals. Indigenous peoples bartered; in other words, they exchanged the furs for European products. Indigenous peoples often traded for metal objects such as pots, knives and axes. They also liked European wool clothing because it offered more advantages than leather. Clothes made of wool protected from the cold better and dried faster after it rained.





Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



Agriculture, commerce & industry: Cod fishing

Cod fishing

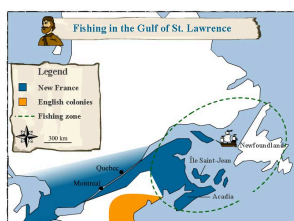
Although the fur trade was the main economic activity in New France, many people were involved in cod fishing. In fact, the first people to travel to New France were fishermen. They came to catch fish off the coasts of Newfoundland, which they brought back to Europe to sell. Fishing did not benefit the colony because the fish were sold in Europe and the fishermen did not settle in New France.

A European technique

Unlike the Native people who caught fish for their own consumption, the Europeans caught fish to sell. That means they needed to catch a lot of fish. So that the fish wouldn't go bad during the long trip back to Europe, the fishermen first brought the fish ashore, where they would empty, clean and dry it. This made the fish last much longer. It was still good when it was sold in France one or even two months later.

Settlements in the Maritimes

Fishing began in the region around Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, and has continued there to this day. Do you know if the people who live in this area now still fish for a living? Are there any fish left after 350 years?



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



Government: Ruled by a distant king

Ruled by a distant king

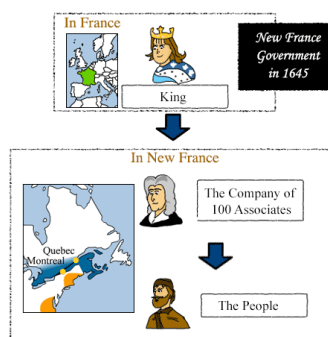
At the time, New France was run more like a business than a colony. Men were sent there to work and trading posts were opened for the fur trade, but virtually no one made New France their permanent home. There were almost no authorities there, only a few seigneurs. Decisions about the colony were made unilaterally or entirely by the king.

A trading colony

In 1627, the king of France entrusted the colony to the Compagnie des Cent-Associés (the company of the hundred associates). In exchange for having a monopoly over the fur trade, the company was responsible for running and expanding the colony. It had to bring over 4 000 colonists to New France within 15 years and help them settle there. Business was not very good for the Compagnie des Cent-Associés, however, and few people came to settle in New France. In 1663, the king took direct control of the colony.

Who defended the colony?

In 1645, France left only a very small number of soldiers in the colony. If New France was attacked, the habitants had to defend it themselves because the army was not sufficiently organized.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix



Transportation & Communication: Roads need to be built and names!

[Roads need to be built and named!](#)

By water

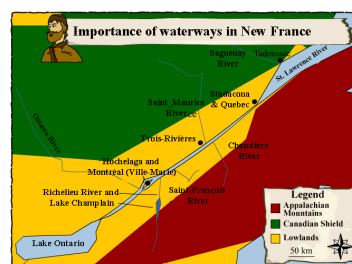
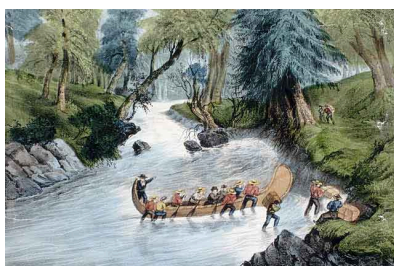
Rivers were the main transportation routes in 1645. The St. Lawrence River was the most important transportation route. The trading posts of Tadoussac, Québec, Trois-Rivières and Montréal were all located along its banks. From there, people could take other rivers and lakes to reach the territory's interior. The biggest constraint? These routes could not be used during the winter! People had to wait for the ice to thaw in the spring. Sometimes rivers also had dangerous rapids. When this was the case, people would have to remove their boats from the water and carry their belongs around to the other side of the rapids.

By land

On dry land, trails were appearing in and around the first settlements. Some of these trails would one day become streets and highways. But the first towns were still very small. Québec was the only settlement to have a network of roads connecting the different parts of town and its surrounding parishes. However, there was only one way getting around on land: by foot! There were still no horses in New France in 1645. If the colonists had to tow loads or a cart, they could use cattle, but these animals were mostly used for ploughing the fields for farming.

Did you know?

The first horse arrived in New France in 1647. It was a gift to Governor Montmagny. It was not until 1665 that the inhabitants finally got horses for ploughing or getting around.



Author: Service national du Récit de l'univers social



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Transportation & Communication: Exploring a new territory

Exploring a new territory

To find furs

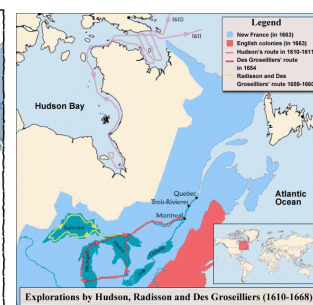
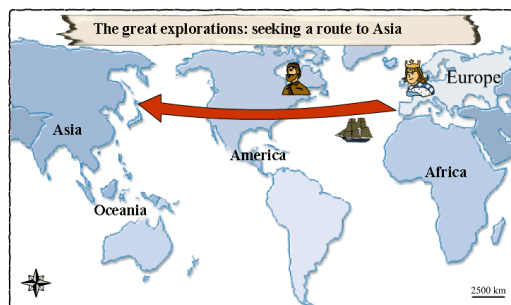
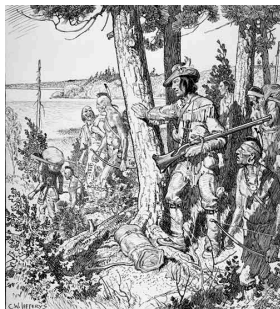
There were many reasons to explore the territory in the early days of colonization, but the most important reason was to find furs. This was what motivated an explorer and coureur de bois like Jean Nicollet, who arrived in the colony in 1618.

To protect the fur trade between Indigenous peoples and the French, Jean Nicollet was sent to visit different Indigenous Nations. He lived with Indigenous peoples, learning their languages and exploring the territory like no Frenchman ever had before. The coureurs de bois would later become valuable explorers for the new colony.

Other explorers such as Hudson, Radisson and Des Groseilliers also travelled the continent searching for furs and other riches.

To find a route to Asia or to evangelize

The French were motivated to explore for other reasons, too. Some, like Champlain, sought a route to the riches of Asia. Others, like the Jesuits, had a missionary ideal and wanted to evangelize or convert Indigenous peoples to Catholicism. In 1645, however, the great explorations were yet to come.



Author: Alexandre Lanoix. Adaptions by LEARN



Transportation & Communication: Travelling to Europe and other colonies

[Travelling to Europe and other colonies](#)

The colony of New France was very isolated from the rest of the world. The inhabitants of New France often had families in France who they could not see because the trip by boat was very long. Plus, it was impossible to travel during the winter because the ice interfered with river traffic.

Canada and the other colonies in America

The other French colonies in America, like Acadia, were also very far from New France. It could take up to 15 days to travel by boat between Québec and Acadia.

Did you know?

Did you know that in 1645 it took up to three months to travel by boat between Québec and France? Imagine all the preparations sailors had to make! Do you know how long it takes to make this trip by plane these days?

Author: Alexandre Lanoix