

CHAPTER 3

Early European Colonies

What's Chapter 3 About?

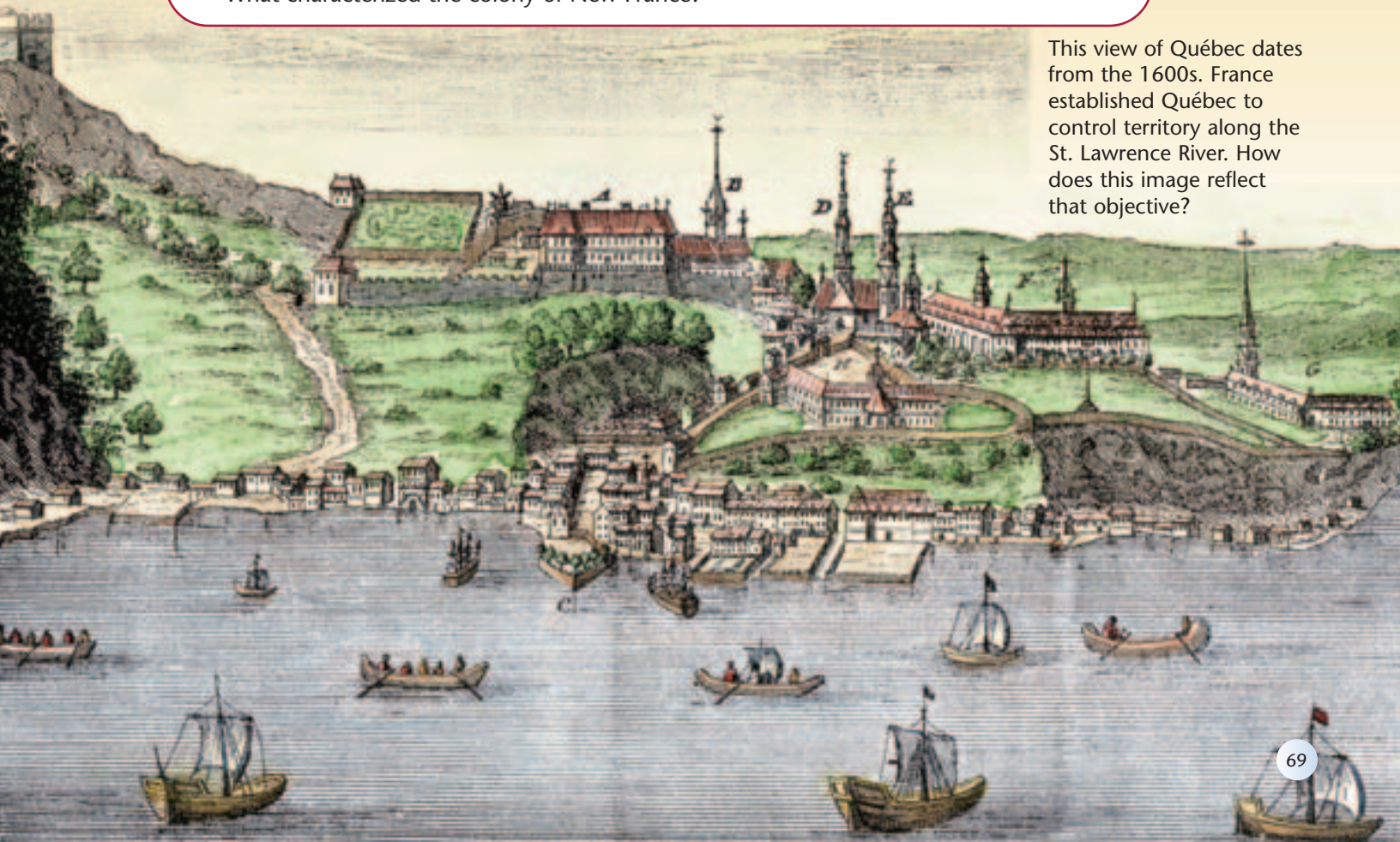
After the voyages of Giovanni Caboto and Jacques Cartier, France and Britain lost interest in exploring North America for many years. They concentrated on fishing cod off the northeast coast.

Starting in the early 1600s, this changed. France and Britain began to establish colonies in North America. The colonies aimed to develop — and to control — new resources.

This chapter is about those colonies — especially about New France. In the lands that became Canada, New France was the first permanent European foothold. It's a fact that lies at the foundation of our country.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What purpose did colonies serve?
- What were the similarities and differences between French and British colonies in North America?
- What impacts did colonization have on First Nations?
- What characterized the colony of New France?



This view of Québec dates from the 1600s. France established Québec to control territory along the St. Lawrence River. How does this image reflect that objective?

CHAPTER TASK

Outline a Play

pastlives theatre

sponsored by Friends of History Society

[Home](#)

[Casting Dept.](#)

[Audition Team](#)

[Set Design](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Enter our World Enter our Adventure

PastLives is a theatre company that specializes in historical plays. The company is preparing a play about life in New France between 1608 and 1700 for the coming theatre season.

The play will focus on these three points:

- The purpose of New France as a colony.
- The influence of the French government and the Catholic Church on the daily life of the people of New France.
- The impact of the development of New France on First Nations.



We need your talents! Please contact one of the following PastLives departments with a proposal for the play.

- Casting Department:** Describe the types of people that you feel should be represented in the play, based on the three points. Describe the relationships among these people, so we can create characters and scenes.
- Set Design:** Sketch a series of venues, or places, where action in the play could take place. Propose at least one sketch for each point. Include an oral or written explanation of the purpose of each venue as a way to develop each point.
- Audition Team:** Do you think you would like to take part in this play? Send us a tape of yourself, describing the occupation of the person you would play and why. Explain your choice by providing background information on the three points.

Perhaps you'll be joining our artistic team this coming season!

[SUBMIT PROPOSAL](#)

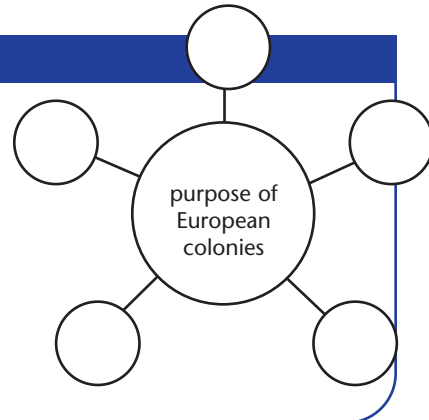
France and Britain Establish Colonies in North America

GET READY

This section presents information that answers the first focus question of this chapter:

What purpose did colonies serve?

As you work through this section, think about what motivated European countries to establish colonies. Try a graphic organizer like this to help you select key information.



What's a Colony?

Colonies and imperialism go together. Imperialism is a policy — an official objective of a country — to dominate other regions of the world. A **colony** is a region of the world dominated in this way — by another country. The country sometimes sends colonists — or settlers — to live in the region as a way to establish control over it.

Colonies supplied European countries with raw resources, which European countries then made into manufactured goods. European countries sold the manufactured goods around the world — and back to their colonies — for a profit.

European countries made the economic rules that their colonies followed. They set the price of raw resources low and the price of manufactured goods high. These rules established an economic system — known as **mercantilism** — designed to make European countries rich.

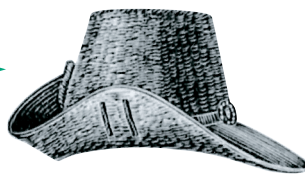
colony: a region claimed and governed by a country from another part of the world

mercantilism: a regulated economic system that made a country rich from its colonies

Mercantilism



European Colony



European Country



Profit for European Country

Supplies cheap raw resources, such as beaver pelts

Creates and sells expensive manufactured goods, such as beaver felt hats

What's a Monopoly?

monopoly: the complete control of a resource by a single company

charter: a set of rules and privileges granted to a company by a king or queen

Europe's rulers and merchants set up **monopolies** to lay claim land and resources in North America, and to establish colonies.

Under a monopoly, a ruler gave a merchant, or a group of merchants, a special economic opportunity. Only that merchant — no others — could make money from the colony. In exchange, the merchant promised to create a permanent settlement to exploit useful resources. The Crown stated the rules and rights of this arrangement in a **charter**, so monopolies were often called “charter companies.”

How Did French and British Imperialism Differ?

As France and Britain pursued domination of North America through colonization, differences between their styles of imperialism emerged.

- British colonists wanted land for farms. French colonists wanted resources, such as furs. This shaped the way Britain and France viewed the peoples who already lived in North America: First Nations. British colonists generally saw First Nations peoples as obstacles — people who had the land they wanted. French colonists generally saw them as partners — people who could help them tap resources.
- Both France and Britain viewed non-Christian peoples, such as First Nations peoples, as “inferior.” In North America, the British pushed First Nations peoples aside as it established colonies. The French took steps to convert First Nations peoples to its religion, Catholicism.

RESPOND

In what way do the British and French styles of imperialism in North America express different ideas of citizenship — of who belongs and doesn't belong?

1. In what way did First Nations belong to the society established by France? In what way did they not belong?
2. What characterized British relations with First Nations?
3. In your opinion, which style of imperialism might have had the biggest impacts on First Nations, the French or the British? Why?

HISTORY HAPPENS

Seventeenth Century Edition

The “newspaper” from the past for today’s reader.

Hat Craze Hits Europe!

— by Beatrix Chronos, your time-roving reporter

PARIS — A new supply of beaver pelts from New France has assured men and women of fashion that they can continue to purchase that most essential wardrobe item: the beaver felt hat.

The demand for beaver hats has skyrocketed in the last few years. A decline in pelts from Russia, where trapping has made the beaver almost extinct, had worried trend-setters across Europe. The hats have become a symbol of status.

“I never leave home without mine,” remarked a well-dressed gent, who wished to remain anonymous. “You only have to look at my hat to see how important I am.”

The most expensive hats are made of pure beaver felt and have very wide brims. The brims don’t do anything useful — except demonstrate how much the owner can afford to pay. Some hats have such wide brims, such as the tricorne, that many now wear them with their brims permanently pinned up.

Beaver felt comes from the soft underfur of the beaver. To make it, the underfur is removed from the skin and, with chemicals, pressed together. Beaver felt is soft, shiny and waterproof.

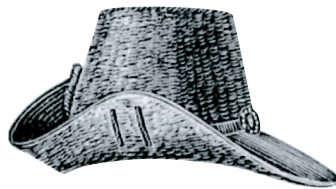
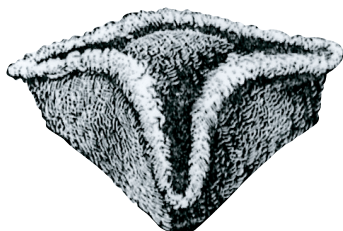
“Beware of imitations!” one fashion expert warns. “Cheap felt contains only 20 or 30 percent beaver fur. The rest is rabbit or seal fur — or even mole fur! If you want a good hat, you have to pay the price. Think of it as an investment. I know people who have willed hats to their children. I’ve heard you can even buy property with hats. Didn’t somebody buy Nantucket Island for thirty pounds and two beaver hats just lately?”

Rumours that the supplies may be reduced, or even cut entirely, because of wars with the Haudenosaunee, have hat manufacturers and the fashion-conscious worried. Everyone hopes the Crown will resolve this threat soon, so the beaver pelts keep coming.



This jaunty gentleman struck a fashionable pose for our painter-in-the-street. Nice hat!

Many styles to choose from!



Health Concerns Aired

PARIS — Some hat manufacturers have complained of — well — being as mad as hatters. Almost all hatters develop trouble with twitching, talking and thinking. “Maybe it’s

the mercury,” one speculated in a lucid moment. “We use mercury to treat the beaver fur so it makes good felt.”

Hat manufacturers have assured customers that beaver felt hats pose no risk to public health. “I wouldn’t eat your hat, though,” one remarked. ■

primary source: an original piece of information, such as a document or image

RESPOND

1. A European fashion — beaver felt hats — spurred the development of New France. What role does fashion play in our lives and economy today? Do any fashions today have big impacts, like hats did on New France?
2. A large modern company hires people in a foreign country to produce T-shirts for teenagers in Canada. The company pays these labourers much less than it would have to pay Canadian labourers. The company makes a huge profit, none of which goes to the labourers in the foreign country.
 - How would you feel if you were the labourer in the foreign country?
 - How would you feel if you lived in the country making the profit?
 - Would you personally support this arrangement if it allowed you to have cheaper clothing?
 - What similarities does this arrangement have to colonization? What purpose did colonies serve?
3. *History Happens* is a fictional newspaper that reports on historical events for today’s readers. How can you tell that the article “Hat Craze Hits Europe” is not a **primary source** document? For example, how does the “writer” describe herself in her byline, next to her name? What modern phrases and expressions can you find that people from the time would not have really used?

Similarities and Differences between French and British Colonies

GET READY

This section presents information to answer the focus question:

What characterized French and British colonies in North America?

You will use the information in a question-and-answer challenge.

You also need to record examples of similarities and differences among:

- The French colony of New France
- The British Thirteen Colonies
- The British-claimed territory of Rupert's Land.

What kind of graphic organizer will help you select and record information? Check the Skills Centre on pages 388 to 390.

The Question-and-Answer Challenge

Use the map, timeline and backgrounders in this section to generate good questions about New France and the colonies that Britain established in North America.

A “good question” gets at important ideas, rather than isolated facts. For the subject of history, good questions make people think and evaluate, not just recite names, dates and numbers.

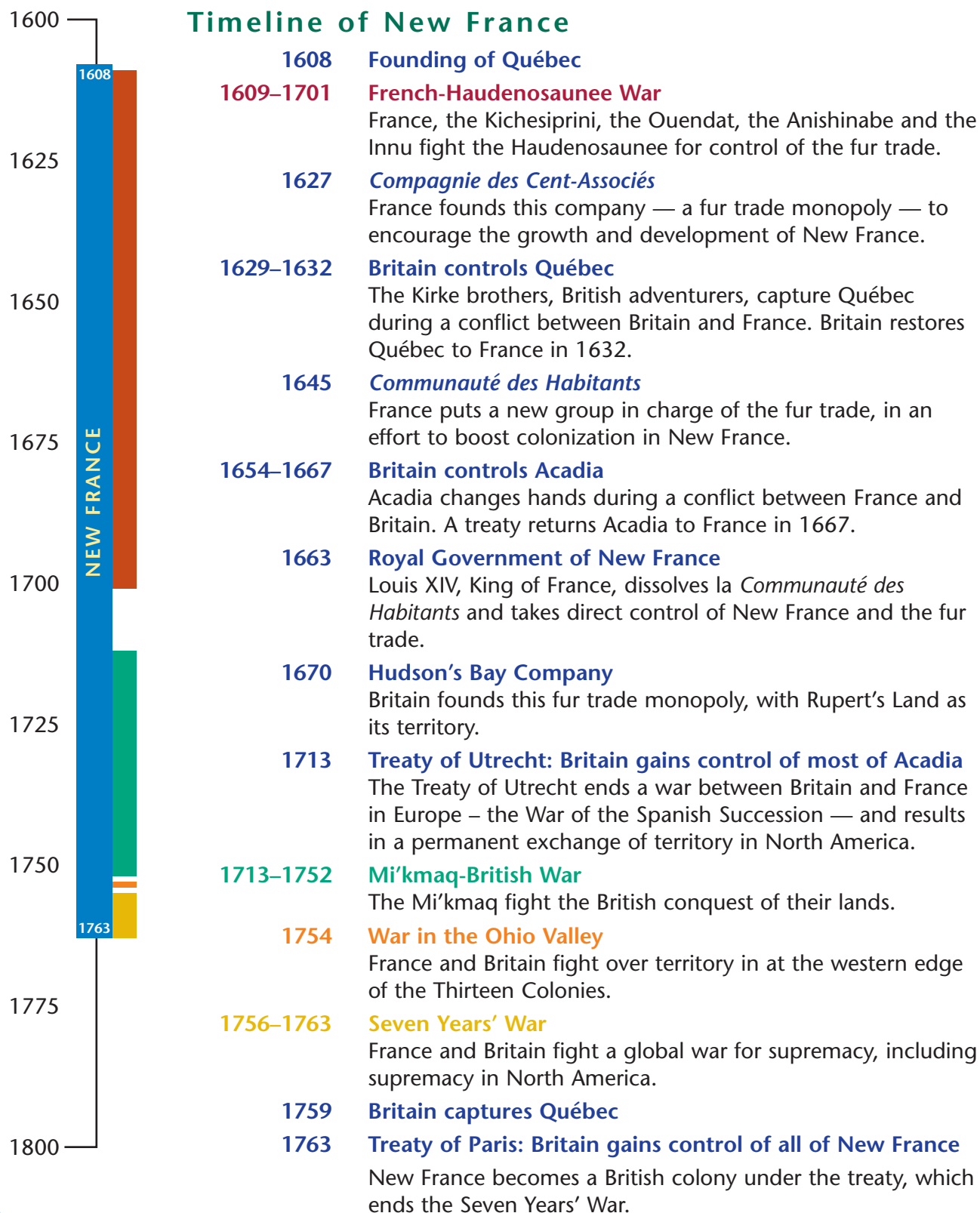
Given the objectives of a good question, what characteristics do you think a good answer would have?

Generate one good question that engages each of these ideas:

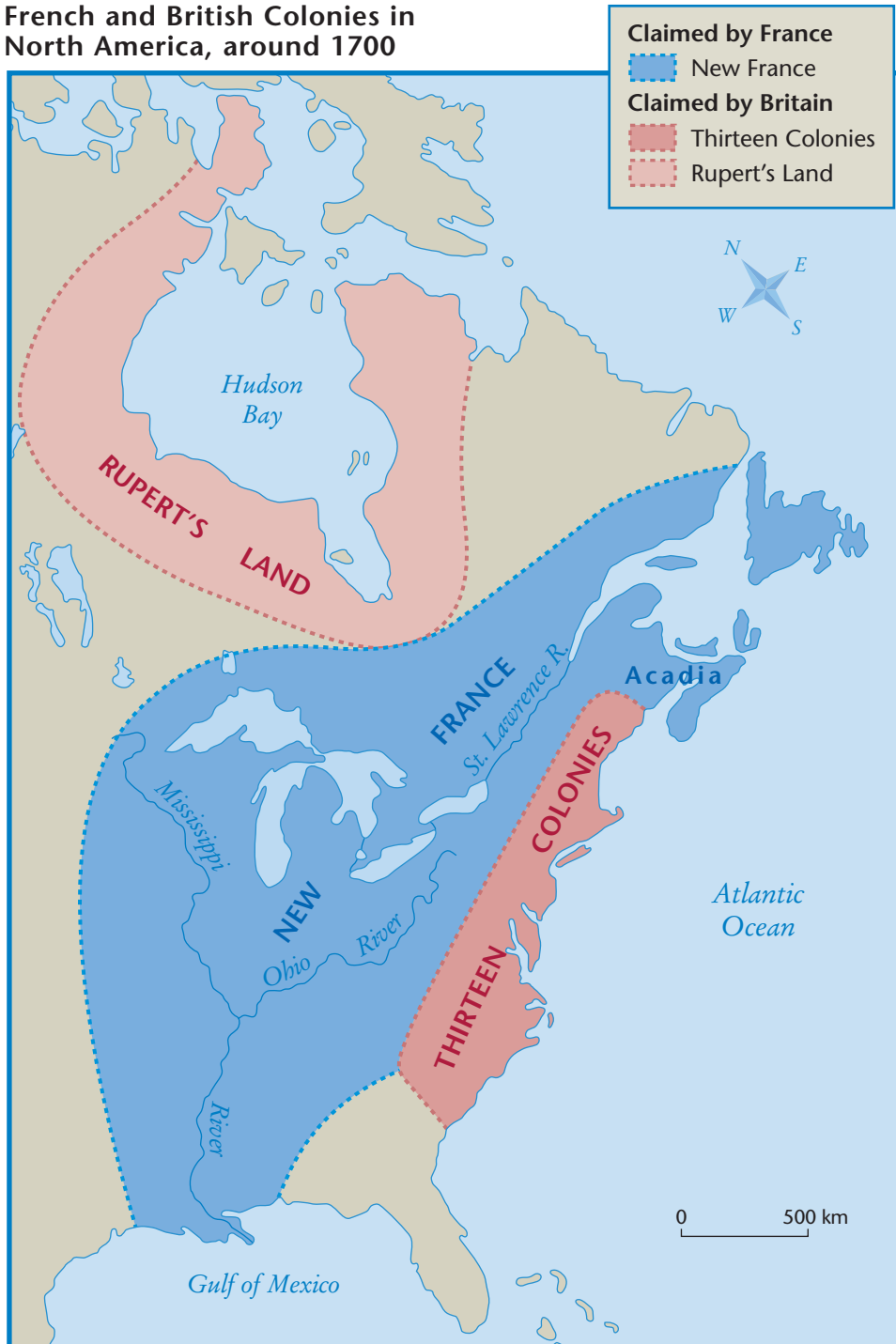
- Cause and effect.
- Geographic challenges and issues.
- Challenges of **coexistence**.
- Demographics.
- Imperialism.
- Economic structure.
- Social structure.

Exchange your questions with another person in your class. Do your best to answer your classmate's good questions with good answers.

coexistence: two or more peoples of diverse cultures living together peacefully



French and British Colonies in North America, around 1700



The Royal Government of New France



↓ direction of power, authority and decision making

New France Background

- **European population**

Year	Population
1700	15 000
1760	65 000

- **Religion:** The colonists in New France were almost all French and Catholic. Part of what France wanted to do, as it built the colony of New France in North America, was to convert First Nations peoples to the Catholic faith.
- **Government:** France at first established monopolies in the fur trade with the expectation that New France would flourish. The fur trade flourished, but not the colony. The colony had few settlers and continued to rely on supplies from France for survival.

Fur trade merchants did not see much reason to change the situation. The fur trade didn't require many French settlers to succeed: it required partnerships with First Nations trappers and traders.

In 1663, France abandoned the strategy of using merchant monopolies to build the colony. The French Crown took direct control of New France and governed it like a province of France. It took steps to encourage more colonists to go to New France, and to promote agriculture and industries in New France, so that the colonists could meet their own needs.

- **Economy:** The fur trade was the primary economic activity of New France. Through the fur trade, New France supplied furs to France — especially beaver furs used in the manufacture of hats. To succeed in the fur trade, New France formed partnerships with the Ouendat, the Anishinabe and the Innu, among other First Nations.

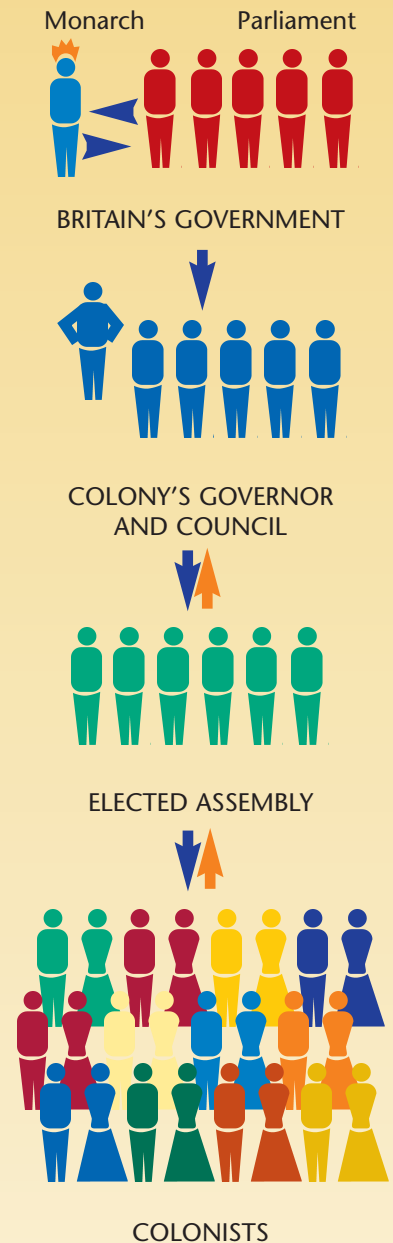
Thirteen Colonies Backgrounder



- **European population**

Year	Population
1700	250 000
1760	2 500 000

- **Religion:** The colonists in the Thirteen Colonies were mostly from Protestant countries such as Britain, Germany, Sweden and Holland. In some cases, colonists came to North America specifically to practise their version of Protestantism. In general, the colonists in the Thirteen Colonies did not place a high priority on converting First Nations to their religion.
- **Government:** In the Thirteen Colonies, each colony had a separate government. Britain controlled these governments by directly appointing their governors, or by creating the chartered companies or group of landholders that then chose governors. Elected assemblies also played a role in most governments of the Thirteen Colonies.
- **Economy:** The Thirteen Colonies used the land intensely to produce agricultural products for Britain, for Britain's colonies in the Caribbean, and for themselves, including wheat, cattle, corn, tobacco and rice. Unlike New France, the Thirteen Colonies did not form partnerships with First Nations. Instead, they saw First Nations as obstacles to their economic prosperity and pushed them off the land.

An Example of Government in Britain's Thirteen Colonies



 direction of power, authority and decision making
 describes an advisory role

Rupert's Land Backgrounder

- **European population:** minimal.
- **Religion:** Protestant, but religion did not play a large role in the territory.
- **Government:** Rupert's Land was the monopoly fur trade territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, granted to the company in 1670. It had a governor, who was the chief officer of the company. It had no elected assembly.
- **Economy:** The Hudson's Bay Company traded in furs. Unlike New France, it did not develop inland forts or seek partnerships with First Nations peoples. Instead, it counted on traders coming directly to its forts at Hudson Bay.

The Hudson's Bay Company did not settle its territory with colonists. The company supplied its forts from Britain, and it also traded with First Nations peoples for food.



FOCUS ON INQUIRY

Would you have survived as a colonist?

The Topic

The colonists who came to North America in the 1600s faced uncertainty and hardship in their newly chosen home. Many people today identify overcoming hardship — the colonists' struggle and determination — as central to the character and history of Canada.

Why? This inquiry aims to give you a sense of that perspective.

Getting Started

In small groups, brainstorm what your needs as colonists would be. Check page 391 of the Skills Centre for tips on brainstorming.

From this list, choose a topic. Be clear about the reasons for your choice. For example, you might choose the topic that intrigues you most, or you might choose the topic you consider most crucial for survival.

Your Goal

Develop a process for retrieving information on this topic. Make sure to answer these questions:

- Where can you get access to the information you need?
- What keywords will help you find information in an encyclopedia, library, or on the Internet?
- What strategies will help you develop new keywords?
- What criteria will help you select relevant information — information generally related to the topic?

Finishing Up

Based on your research into colonial life, do you think you would have survived as a colonist? Select the most interesting piece of information you found related to that question. Be prepared to discuss it in class.

FOCUS SKILLS

Retrieving Information

In Chapter 2, you used a questionnaire to retrieve information. In this inquiry, you will retrieve information from books, from the Internet, or from both. Share and discuss your process for retrieving information.



Would this pewter goblet have met a need in New France, or was it a luxury?

Impacts of Colonization on First Nations Peoples

story: in this book, stories are based on real historical events, and often on real people. Some stories create characters, or imagine the thoughts of real people, to explore historical events.

GET READY

This section presents **stories** that describe the experiences of the Mi'kmaq, Kichesiprini and Haudenosaunee as French and British colonies became established in North America. They provide information about this chapter-focus question:

What impacts did colonization have on First Nations?

As you read these stories:

- Look for examples of pressures to change that these societies faced.
- Predict some effects of these pressures.

Set up a graphic organizer, such as the one below. Fill in the centre column as you read with words or illustrations. Fill in the last column after you have read each story.

Society	Pressures to Change	Possible Effects

The Beautiful Trail

A Story from a Mi'kmaq Perspective

— This representation of historical events was written with the advice and assistance of Rod Jeddore, Miawpukek First Nation.


Sulian watches as the priest baptizes his baby brother. Masamouet, one of the Mi'kmaq's spiritual leaders, says it is important for the Mi'kmaq to become Catholic. If the Mi'kmaq are Catholic, Europeans will recognize them as a "Catholic nation" — a nation in its own right. Masamouet says the French will respect this. He calls the strategy the "Beautiful Trail."

The French don't pose a threat to Sulian's people now. They live on land the Mi'kmaq don't need, because they drain salt marshes for their farmland. Sulian's sister married a French settler last spring. His cousin, too. The French are friends and allies.

But Masamouet says to think about the future. Everyone has heard what is happening in the south. The news has spread up through the Mi'kmaq's trading partners and allies. The British have pushed people off the land. Masamouet says it's good to be cautious, even with the French. So, Sulian's baby brother is now Catholic. Sulian's turn is next. He closes his eyes as the priest touches the water to his forehead.

Masamouet says if the British ever decide to invade **Mi'kma'ki** — the homeland of the Mi'kmaq — the Mi'kmaq must fight them and win. They must do this not only because the British are enemies of their allies the French, but because the British will want the land. The Mi'kmaq will be fighting for their lives.

Mi'kma'ki:

 mee-gmaw-gy

How can you tell that this painting, done around 1850, depicts the Mi'kmaq people after contact with Europe?

Micmac Indians, Anon. Canadian, #6663, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1957




The Beaver Wars

A Story from a Kichesiprini Perspective

— This representation of historical events was written with the advice and assistance of Stephen McGregor, Kitigan Zibi Anishinàbeg First Nation.

Kichesiprini:

 kich-eh-sip-py-ree-nee

Kichi Sibi:

 kich-eh-see-bee

Kaponicin can see the strain on the adults' faces.

In a surprise winter raid, the Haudenosaunee have captured their island — the last stronghold of the **Kichesiprini** people along the **Kichi Sibi** (Ottawa River).

“We cannot retake the island,” says a member of the Fisher Clan responsible for the community’s defense. “We do not have enough warriors, and we don’t have any guns.”

Up and down the Kichi Sibi, the burned villages and smashed canoes of the Kichesiprini testify to the destruction of years of war and disease.

Since 1629, the Kichesiprini have been under attack from the Mohawk and Oneida, member nations of the Haudenosaunee.

Kaponicin’s people call the conflict the Beaver Wars. The Haudenosaunee want to break the alliance among the Kichesiprini, the Ouendat, the Innu and the French, which has left the Haudenosaunee out of the fur trade along the St. Lawrence. The Haudenosaunee have guns — received in trade with their European allies (first the Dutch and later the British).

As the war developed, the first wave of new diseases from Europe hit the Kichesiprini. In 1639, smallpox killed almost half the people.

“Perhaps we must now travel to the French trade forts,” proposes the speaker,

resuming his observations. “There we will find protection from the Haudenosaunee.”

Kaponicin has often heard this suggestion, and as often heard it rejected. The priests at the French forts want the Kichesiprini to give up their ways. They say the Kichesiprini must become Catholic and take up farming. They say only Catholics can trade for guns.

Kaponicin looks around the circle of grim faces. They are thinking over the proposal, and this time nobody speaks against it.

Kichesiprini Traditional Lands



The traditional lands of the Kichesiprini centre on the Ottawa River, between the lands of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinabe. The Haudenosaunee captured one of their strongholds — today called Morrison’s Island — in 1642.

Brothers and Enemies

A Story from a Haudenosaunee Perspective

— This representation of historical events was written with the advice and assistance of Brenda Davis, Cayuga First Nation.

Tahnee looks up. She sees the young man entering the longhouse. He has dark hair and dark eyes, but his skin is light. He looks tired and confused. Tahnee’s brother brings the young man to their fire. Her mother has said they should adopt all captives. The village has lost so many people to wars and epidemics that capturing people to adopt has become a new objective of the Haudenosaunee. The clan mothers say adoption will allow the Haudenosaunee to maintain their population.

“Where does he come from?” Tahnee asks her brother.

“We found him just outside Montréal,” he says. “He was with a hunting party. We caught them all.”

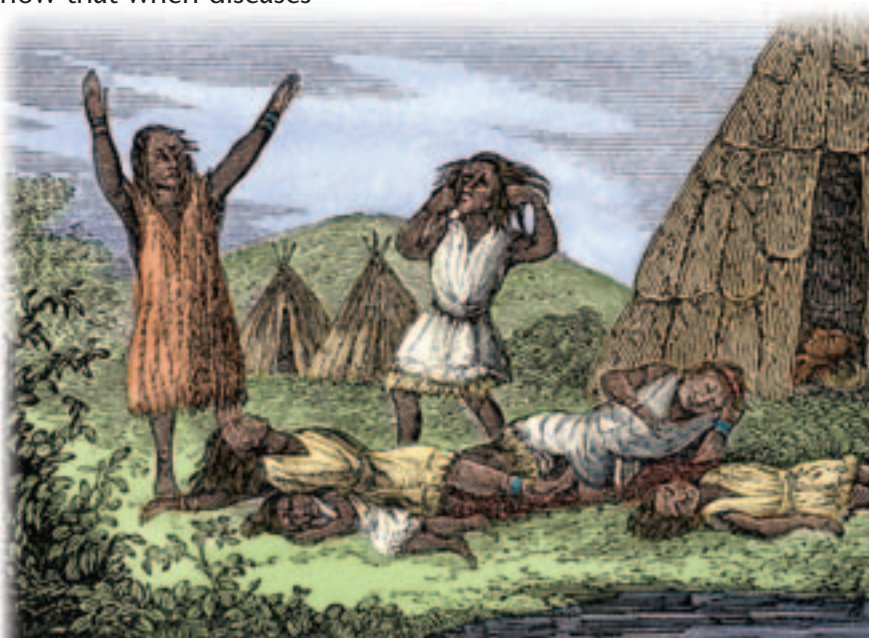
immunity: the ability of the body to fight off infection

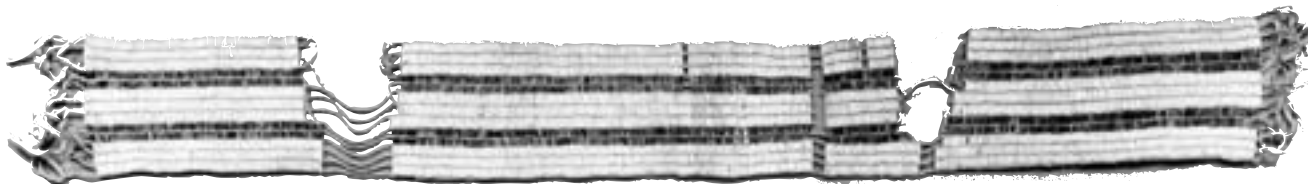
epidemic: the infection of a large population by a disease

What Impact Did Epidemics Have on First Nations?

The First Peoples of North America, South America and Australia had no **immunity** to diseases brought by Europeans — such as smallpox, measles and tuberculosis — because they had never been exposed to them. Scientists who study **epidemics** know that when diseases strike populations with no immunity, many people become ill at the same time. Few remain healthy enough to care for the sick, or to provide food or protection. Up to half the population can die. Historians believe this level of devastation decimated First Nations and Inuit peoples after Europeans began coming to North America. What impact do you think a rapid drop in population could have on societies and communities?

This woodcut shows a smallpox epidemic among a First Nation people in territory colonized by Britain. It is a reproduction of an image whose original date is unknown.





This is the Guswentah (Two Row Wampum) Treaty of 1645. The Haudenosaunee concluded this treaty with the Dutch, who had established a colony in what is today New York. The Guswentah Treaty became the standard for all future treaties between the Haudenosaunee and Europeans. When the British took over the colonies of the Dutch in North America in 1674, they accepted this treaty.

Look at the rows of dark shell beads on the belt. One row represents a canoe and the other represents a European sailing ship. Each vessel is symbolic of the people's customs and laws — separate and equal.

It's been a long war, but the Haudenosaunee cannot afford to make peace. Not yet. Not while New France arms Haudenosaunee enemies — the Ouendat, the Kichesiprini and others — in its effort to dominate the fur trade. Not while the population of New France steadily grows and its settlements threaten to expand into Haudenosaunee territory. New France doesn't have many colonists — not nearly as many as the British settlements — but the few it has have concentrated near Haudenosaunee lands.

The Haudenosaunee have become allies of the Dutch in this bitter war, and will soon become allies of the British. The Europeans trade with the Haudenosaunee for guns. Tahnee is glad of this. How could the Haudenosaunee Confederacy fight its enemies without them?

Enemies — and here is a new French brother at her fire. Tahnee picks up the container of water near where she sits and prepares to offer him a drink.

RESPOND

Imagine that the leaders of the Mi'kmaq, the Kichesiprini or the Haudenosaunee have invited you to participate in a talking circle to discuss the future. Colonization by the French, the British and the Dutch has put many pressures on each of their societies. Choose a society. What, in your opinion, is the most important pressure? Why? You will have a chance to speak, just as everyone does.

PERSPECTIVES ON “Civilization”

The quotation marks around the word *civilization* in the title on this page signal that different people have different views about what civilization means. For example, consider how French and Mi’kmaq people saw each other in the 1600s.

Pierre Biard

Pierre Biard, a Jesuit missionary among the Mi’kmaq, wrote this perspective in 1611.

The people are few and isolated. They are savage, haunting the woods, ignorant, lawless and rude. They think they are better, more valiant and more ingenious than the French, and, what is difficult to believe, richer than we are.

— Adapted from a quotation in Reuben Thwaites (editor), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896, page 173.

Marc Lescarbot

This perspective comes from a French lawyer and historian who lived in Acadia in 1606 and 1607.

They have courage, fidelity, generosity, and humanity. They speak with much judgment and good sense. Before they do anything important, their chief is listened to with attention, and reply is made on each point. We commonly call them savages, but the word is abusive and unmerited, for they are anything but that.

— Adapted from Marc Lescarbot, *History of New France*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1914, pages 210–217.

A Mi’kmaq Elder

A Mi’kmaq Elder gave this speech to a group of French in 1677.

Believe me, we consider ourselves much happier than you. Believe also that you cannot persuade us that your country is better than ours.

I am greatly astonished that the French have so little cleverness in trying to persuade us to convert our wigwams into houses of stone and wood, which are tall and lofty. Why do men need houses twenty to thirty metres in height? Do we not find in our own shelters all the conveniences and advantages that you have in yours?

— Adapted from a quotation in Christian LeClerq, *New Relation of Gaspesia*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1910, pages 103–104.

RESPOND

What might shape the way people of diverse cultures see each other?
Why do people sometimes judge others as “civilized” or “uncivilized”?

Meet New France

GET READY

New France was the first European colony established in the lands that would become Canada, so getting to know New France is key to getting to know Canada's history. This section presents profiles of real people who lived in New France and backgrounders that will help you understand their role in the society of the colony. It answers this chapter-focus question:

What characterized the colony of New France?

As you read about these people, think about your chapter task. The information in this section can help you identify types of people and places that contributed to life in New France.

What Was the Social Structure of New France?

In New France, as in France, some people were understood to be more important than others.

The most important people were born into the ruling class, or nobility. These people were generally wealthy landowners. Within the ruling class, the most important noble was the king of France.

Wealth, even without nobility, commanded respect and prestige. Merchants were often wealthy.

Most people had neither nobility nor wealth. They were farmers, and most did not have full ownership of their land.



The Catholic Church played an important role in organizing French society. The Church provided moral direction, and also founded hospitals, orphanages and schools.



This painting shows Louis XIV, king of France from 1643 to 1715.

Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac

1622–1698

There goes Governor Frontenac. What an impressive man! There's nothing homemade about his clothing — the tailored jacket, the lace collar, the buckled shoes. It all comes straight from France. Maybe his wife arranges his wardrobe for him. Do you know she has never come to New France? No, she's still in Paris. She says she can be much more useful to Frontenac there — keeping in touch with people at the royal court, keeping his prospects alive with the king, assuring the people to whom he owes money that all is well.

Frontenac arrived in New France in 1672. He had already seen many ups and downs. He was a nobleman who enjoyed the rich life — so much so, that he ended up borrowing a lot of money and going into debt.

In 1672, King Louis XIV appointed Frontenac governor of New France. The appointment allowed Frontenac to keep his property, instead of losing it to pay his debts.

The people profiled in this section really existed, but each profile contains an element of imagination. What characterizes the imaginative part of each profile?

Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, left his mark on New France as governor during the late 1600s. He took steps to secure the control of New France over the fur trade. This painting by John Henry de Rinzy (1852–1936) shows Frontenac leading an expedition to establish a new fur trade fort on Lake Ontario.



As governor, Frontenac presided over the Sovereign Council in New France. He had strong ideas about the future of the colony, which often brought him into conflict with other members of the council and with merchants. The king, displeased with all this conflict, recalled Frontenac to France in 1682.

In France, Frontenac tried to persuade the king to give him a new position, but he lost most of his property and lived in poverty for a while.

By 1689, New France was under threat from attacks by the Haudenosaunee and from invasion by the British. War with the Haudenosaunee had made life especially difficult in the colony. People felt afraid to work the fields or to bring furs to Montréal. Louis XIV, King of France, decided to go on the offensive. He had already, in 1665, sent soldiers to New France — members of the Régiment de Carignan-Salières. Now he sent Frontenac, an experienced commander.

Frontenac attacked the Haudenosaunee, burning their crops and villages. His tactics contributed to the Great Peace that the Haudenosaunee concluded with the French and their allies in 1701.

Frontenac also stood firm against the British, and successfully defended the colony in 1690.

In 1690, British ships attacked Québec and demanded its surrender. Frontenac vowed his only reply would come from “the mouths of my cannons and guns.” This painting, by Emile Rouarque in 1690, shows Frontenac “replying” — and successfully defending the colony.



New France Who's Who

The Sovereign Council

In 1663, the king of France established the Sovereign Council to rule New France in accordance with his decisions. It included:

- A **Governor**, who represented the king, controlled the military, and looked after the defence of the colony. He also dealt with “external relations,” such as trade with First Nations.
- An **Intendant**, the chief administrator of the colony. He worked to keep the colony in good order, and to make it less dependent on France for meeting its basic needs. He also kept his eye out for new ways to exploit the colony for the benefit of France.
- The **Bishop of Québec**, who represented the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church played an important role in the colony, as it did in New France. It provided spiritual and moral guidance, and founded schools, hospitals and orphanages. Members of the Catholic clergy also played an open and active role in governing the colony. The influence of the church remained strong even after New France became a British colony in 1763. Catholic people consulted the clergy before making important decisions, and their reputation depended on their standing in the church.

Soldiers

Under Frontenac, many soldiers came to New France to defend the colony against the Haudenosaunee and against the British. The king wanted military men to settle in New France, so he offered seigneuries to officers, who then encouraged their soldiers to settle on their land. A seignury represented an opportunity for an officer to change his life. Many men had chosen a military career only because they needed some way to make a living.



François de Laval, Bishop of Québec during the late 1600s, had lasting effects on Canada. For example, he established a seminary to train priests in New France — today's Laval University.

Jean Talon had a short but influential term as the first intendant of New France. Talon encouraged the development of industries, as this painting of him shows. The painting, *Canada's First Shipyard*, was done by Rex Woods (1902–1987). Talon also encouraged increased immigration and the development of new agricultural crops. With all these measures, he sought to make New France self-reliant.

Marie-Claude Chamois

1656–1705

dowry: money a woman brings to a marriage — an old custom

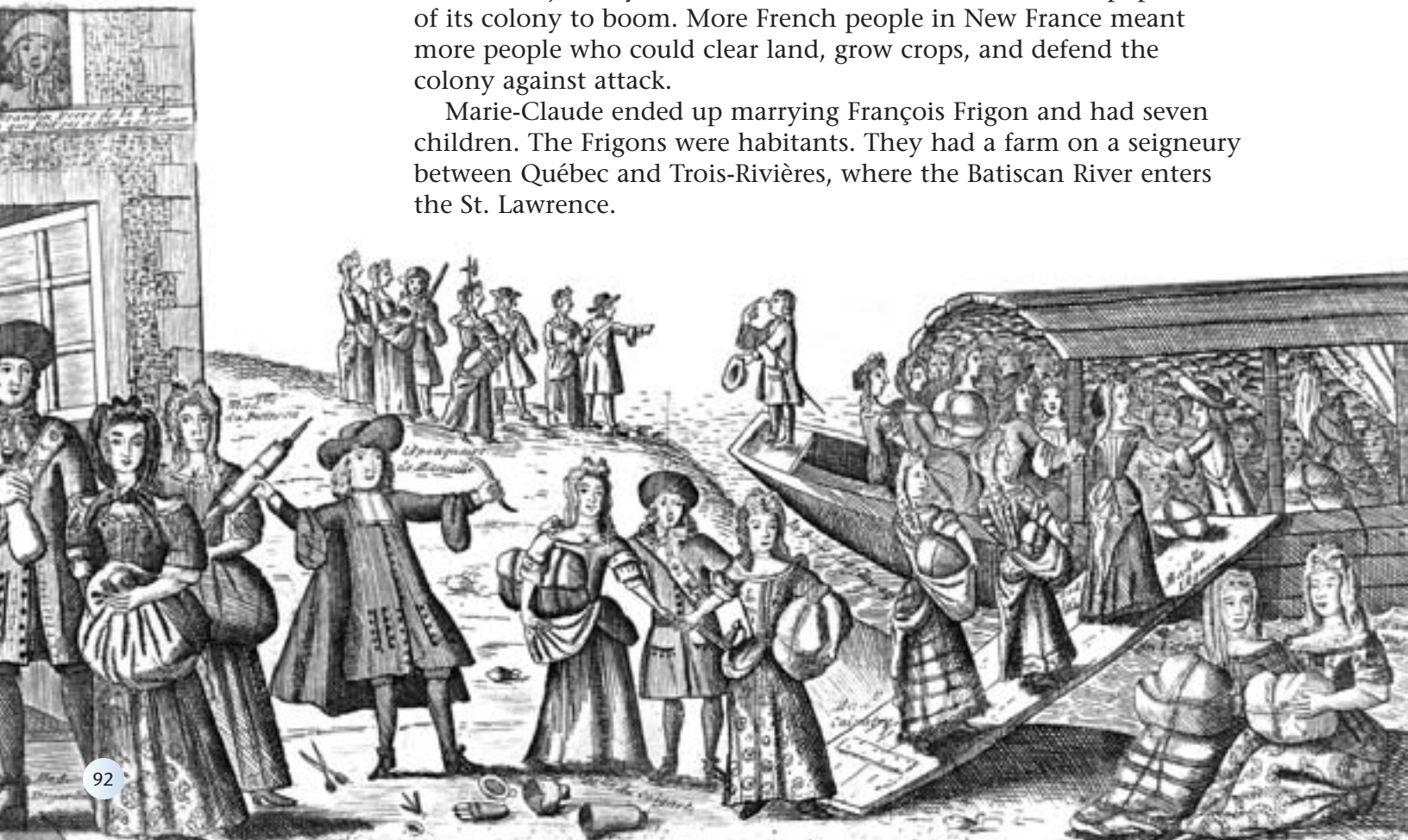
Marie-Claude Chamois, alone and fourteen years old, wonders what her new life will hold. She can see the fortifications of Québec, towering from the cliff over the wide river below, as her ship slides towards the dock. Weeks ago, she had left the squalor of Paris, without so much as a goodbye to her mother. She may regret that some day, but she's not thinking about that now. She's worrying about where she will sleep tonight, where she will find a meal, and where and when she will find a good husband.

This illustration shows some *filles du roi* preparing to board a ship bound for New France. What challenges do you think they will face in their new home?

Marie-Claude Chamois came to New France as a *fille du roi* — a “daughter of the King.” Like many destitute or orphaned girls in Paris, she had found shelter with a religious order, or in a government institution for the needy. Louis XIV, the King of France, offered these girls a fresh start in New France, as wives to the soldiers and other men making a living there.

The king provided Marie-Claude with a **dowry** and covered the cost of her journey across the Atlantic. France wanted the population of its colony to boom. More French people in New France meant more people who could clear land, grow crops, and defend the colony against attack.

Marie-Claude ended up marrying François Frigon and had seven children. The Frigons were habitants. They had a farm on a seigneurie between Québec and Trois-Rivières, where the Batiscan River enters the St. Lawrence.



They cleared the land themselves, which was a huge and difficult task. They cut down the trees with axes, and used oxen to pull the stumps. Only after they had cleared the land could they plant crops and raise animals — provide the food they needed themselves, and that supplied the growing villages of New France.

The Frigons had what they needed to live modestly, but decently, for their time — a house they built from rough-hewn timber, a barn and a stable, two oxen, four cows, three pigs, and a few sheep and goats. They had seven chairs, a pine table and even a small feather mattress, according the records that still exist today in the parish of Batiscan.

Like other habitants, the Frigons learned about their new land as they built their new lives with their own hands. Foods of the Innu and Kichesiprini, such as blueberries, maple sugar, and moose, became part of their diet. They adopted First Nations clothing and technology — mittens, snowshoes and toboggans — designed to cope with the harsh winters of Canada.

For their part, the Innu and Kichesiprini valued French products, such as metal pots and knives, cloth, guns and ammunition. Habitants and First Nations often traded with each other.

Marie-Claude and François Frigon worked and they endured — the first of many generations of Frigons who lived along the St. Lawrence.

What aspects of habitant life can you glean from this painting created by Cornelius Krieghoff (1815–1872)?





A seigneurie was arranged so that habitants had access to the river. Why do you think access to the river was important?



habitant(s): a-bee-taw

seigneurie: sen-yur-ee

paysan: pay-ee-zaw

corvée: cor-vay

coureur de bois :
cur-rur-deh-bwa

New France Who's Who

Habitants and Seigneurs

Habitants were farmers who lived on seigneuries. Seigneuries were large plots of land owned by seigneurs — or landlords — who received the land as grants from the king of France. Most seigneurs were men from noble families, but women and commoners could also become seigneurs.

To keep their land grants, seigneurs had to recruit settlers — habitants — to farm it. They also had to build a house for themselves, and a flourmill and a church for the habitants.

Habitants means “inhabitants” — people who inhabit the land. In France, they would have been called *paysans* (peasants). *Paysans* rarely owned anything — their seigneurs, in fact, often owned *them*. But arrangements were more flexible in New France. Seigneurs needed people to clear the land. If a habitant wanted to sell an established farm and clear a new piece of land, what was the harm?

In exchange for the right to establish a farm, habitants had to clear the land, plant crops and build a house. They also had to pay the seigneur's miller to grind their grain into flour and give a few days of labour each year to the seigneur. This owed labour was called *corvée*.

Some habitants neglected their farms because they found the fur trade an easier way to make a living in New France. Seigneurs and habitants sometimes ended up in court, answering complaints that they had not followed through on their obligations. Some habitants gave up farming altogether to make their living in the fur trade. They became *coureurs de bois*, working independently — often illegally — to trade with First Nations. Some became *voyageurs* — men hired to paddle trade goods and furs in and out of the Great Lakes.

IDENTITY THEN AND NOW

Les Frigons: Still Here

An Interview with Gérald Frigon

Marie-Claude and François Frigon became the ancestors of more than three thousand descendants who now live in North America. Chances are, if you meet someone with the last name Frigon, they can trace their roots to New France, and to the *premier rang* — “first row” — ribbon farm fronting the St. Lawrence that Marie-Claude and François cleared and tilled.

The Frigon family has reunions every five years at Batiscan, to celebrate their heritage and culture, more than three centuries old. Gérald Frigon, president of the *Association des familles Frigon*, says as many as two hundred fifty people attend the grand family meetings.

“The reunions give us a chance to meet and exchange stories about the lives of our ancestors. We laugh, we eat and we talk about the future. And we remember.

“We are amazed at the courage of these pioneers who had only their two hands and a few rudimentary tools to build a home and a future for their children. It’s not hard to cut trees and build houses today. You can do it very quickly. But with only an axe, a hand saw, a hammer and a few knives, it was quite a different matter. And the trees were big three hundred years ago!”

Monsieur Frigon marvels at how historic documents and shared stories have helped him know and feel connected to his ancestors. “I feel a great deal of pride in being a descendant of such courageous people.”



The Frigons of today know exactly where their ancestors started life in Canada. The top photo shows the site of the original farm at Batiscan. It was taken at the Frigon family reunion in 2005. Two people have dressed up to portray Marie-Claude and François Frigon.

You can still see the imprint of seigneuries on farms in Québec, as the bottom photo of the Richelieu River shows.

RESPOND

Collective, or group, identity comes from sharing a language and culture. It also comes from sharing a history. What aspects of history are important to the identity of the Frigon family? Find at least two examples.

Pierre-Esprit Radisson

1636–1710

Pierre-Esprit Radisson talks over, one more time, the daring surprise attack with his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart des Groseillers. The British fur-trading forts around Hudson Bay will be easy to capture. How do they know? Because they helped the British set the forts up! Pierre-Esprit is grinning now. They will lead two French ships to Fort Nelson. They know exactly how to get there, and how the fort will try to defend itself.

Pierre-Esprit was a *coureur de bois* — a runner of the woods. He pretty much worked for himself, seeking out First Nations traders and supplies of beaver that he could bring into the fur trade. At different times, he sided with both the British and the French — whichever he thought would offer him the best return for his skills and knowledge.

When Pierre-Esprit was a young teenager, newly arrived in New France, he was captured during a raid. Information is sketchy about who captured him, but it may have been a nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. He was adopted by a family among his captors — a common practice among the Haudenosaunee at the time. They viewed adoption of captives as a way to boost their population, which had been decimated by war and disease. We don't know for certain under what circumstances Pierre-Esprit left the Haudenosaunee. Did he escape, or was he ransomed? Did he long to leave, or was he reluctant to leave?

What's a *Coureur de Bois*?

Coureur de bois means “runner of the woods.” The term comes from the way some men in New France engaged in the fur trade — by “running into the forest” to seek and trade with First Nations. The *coureurs* worked independently — for themselves. At first, the government of New France encouraged independent trading. Soon, however, it made independent trading illegal. This did not stop the *coureurs de bois*, who sold their furs wherever they could, even in the British colonies.

Whatever the circumstances, he returned to New France and, in Montréal, found his brother-in-law and brother-in-adventure, Médard Chouart des Groseillers.

Barely twenty years old, Pierre-Esprit left Montréal with Médard on a long expedition into the west, into lands unknown by Europeans. They returned after a year of travels — their canoes loaded down with prime beaver pelts, their eyes shining as they impatiently related news of a rich fur region north of Lake Superior. They expected a hero's welcome. Instead, they were arrested and fined for travelling into the west and trading without permission of the governor.

Stung but defiant, Pierre-Esprit and Médard took their news to Britain. The British responded by forming the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, a direct competitor in the fur trade with New France. Britain sent Pierre-Esprit and Médard to claim the lands around Hudson Bay for Britain — which they did. They built forts for the Hudson's Bay Company, too.

But Pierre-Esprit and Médard had not forgotten that fine for illegal trading. After five years working for the British, they returned to New France and tried to lodge a complaint. Governor Frontenac, however, refused to consider it.

In New France, Pierre-Esprit met Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye, who had started a new fur-trading company called Compagnie du Nord (Company of the North). The king wanted the company to compete against the Hudson's Bay Company, so Pierre-Esprit and Médard planned their surprise attack on Britain's Fort Nelson in Hudson Bay. It was very successful, and they captured a cargo of fine beaver pelts.

But the attack did not please the king or Governor Frontenac: France and Britain weren't at war! (At least, not then.) Pierre-Esprit and Médard had to pay a hefty tax on their captured furs.

Médard decided to remain in New France, despite this setback. Pierre-Esprit, however, left for Britain to work — again — for the Hudson's Bay Company. He never returned to New France.

Agathe de Saint-Père

atelier:  a-tal-ee-ay

1657–1748

Agathe de Saint-Père looks particularly pleased with herself today, bustling around her Montréal *atelier* — the workshop where she employs many busy weavers. She has just received word that the king was impressed with her cloth and maple-sugar candies. Agathe had hoped the king might offer her some financial assistance, but she is not disappointed. Her plan did not work out this time, but perhaps it will in the future. Her active mind is already thinking up new ways to impress the king with homegrown products, made and consumed in New France.

Agathe was smart and dynamic. She had lived in New France all her life, and had at times traded furs, bought and sold land, lent money, and managed other people's money. Her life had not been easy, but she knew how to make the best of things. When she was fifteen, her mother died, so she had raised her brothers and sisters, one of them just barely a month old. She continued to take care of her brothers and sisters even after she married a French military officer and began to raise eight children of her own.

Who might you have met at this bustling market in Québec?



New France Who's Who

Merchants

Many kinds of businesses grew up in Québec, Montréal and Trois-Rivières. Strolling through these settlements, you would see the shops of merchants such as blacksmiths, shoemakers, masons, bakers and butchers.

Many merchants made their living in the fur trade. They imported goods from France, and traded these goods with the Innu, the Ouendat and the Anishinabe, among other First Nations, for furs. They also bought furs from *coureurs de bois* and other colonists who traded in furs for extra income. The merchants then shipped the furs to France, where they sold them — for a profit, they hoped.

In 1700, the wreck of a supply ship from France created a shortage of linen and wool in New France. Agathe decided to make cloth herself. She experimented with materials available locally: nettles, bark fibre, cottonweed, and the woolly hair of the buffalo. Her experiments turned into a serious business, weaving linen and wool in Montréal. She ransomed nine English weavers, who had been captured by the Innu — or perhaps the Anishinabe — during skirmishes with Britain’s Thirteen Colonies. Under Agathe’s direction, these weavers trained other weavers, using looms Agathe had copied from the one model she had found in the town.

Jean-Alexis Lemoine

1680–1754

Jean-Alexis Lemoine examines the young man in his shop with a knowing eye. Life in the fur trade! Does this young man know what he’s in for? The flies, the heat, the rain. The back-breaking work of unloading and reloading canoes, and carrying everything around the rapids. He’ll need a gun, yes, and a good knife wouldn’t hurt. Sure, Jean-Alexis can sell him those things and everything else a voyageur needs. Except stout arms, a stouter back, and a love of adventure. Jean-Alexis remembers the feeling of being free and strong. If he were young, he’d probably do it again. Pardon? A pipe? Well, of course — every voyageur needs a pipe!

Jean-Alexis Lemoine was born in New France and spent his youth working as a voyageur and fur trader. No farming for him! Every spring, he joined the flotilla of canoes gathered at Montréal as a hired man. The canoes were loaded with trade goods from France, such as guns, cloth, and metal pots and knives. The voyageurs paddled the canoes up the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, heading to the fur trade forts in the west. At the forts, they dropped off the goods and picked up the furs that First Nations such as the Anishinabe had traded over the winter. Then, the voyageurs turned around and paddled back to Montréal, arriving before the fall and freeze-up.

What opportunities did life as a voyageur offer young men in New France?



Jean-Alexis made a little money this way, and, when he married, he opened a small shop in Montréal that sold supplies to voyageurs and local French troops.

Jean-Alexis was no ordinary shopkeeper. He had the talent to run a business, but he also had connections. His sisters, for example, had married into families with influence in the colony's government and merchant class. His second wife was the daughter of one of Montréal's most important merchants.

Jean-Alexis also traded in furs — a little extra business, a little extra money. He entered into agreements with officers commanding posts in Anishinabe territory, supplying them with trade goods and receiving furs in exchange. He also bought furs from people who traded directly with the Innu and the Anishinabe, such as habitants and others looking to supplement their living. He then sold these furs to bigger merchants, who shipped them to France.

With the money from his businesses, Jean-Alexis bought some land not far from Montréal — not a seigneurie, but a place he owned and managed for himself.

What's a Voyageur?

Voyageur means "traveller." The voyageurs were men from New France who travelled between the fur merchants of Montréal and the fur trade posts of the Great Lakes, and eventually further west.

 voy-a-jur

François-Étienne Cugnet

1688–1751

There are plenty of ways to make money in New France. François-Étienne Cugnet is sure of it, and the report in his hands confirms it. An ironworks! It could make axes, ploughs and stoves right here in New France. Surely this would be better for everybody — the colonists who need the tools, the merchants who want new business opportunities — than relying on imported tools from France. He should start looking for investors. He should approach the king for a loan! The king will be interested in starting an ironworks in the colony, Cugnet thinks. It will help the colony thrive and develop in new directions, just like the king wants.

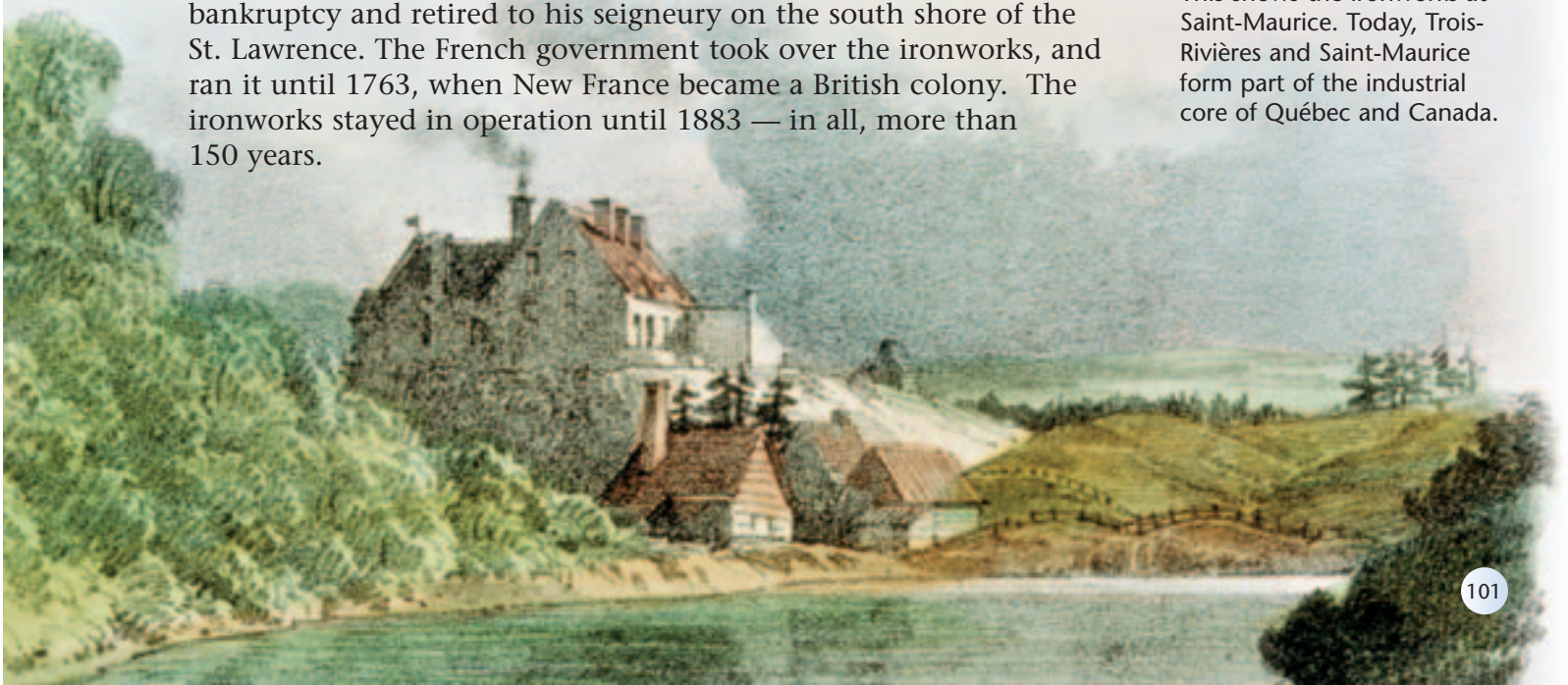
Cugnet was involved in several business ventures in New France, including a glue factory, and growing and exporting Canadian tobacco. His biggest, favourite venture, though, was the ironworks.

Cugnet found his investors and got his loan. In 1730, he set up the ironworks — les Forges du Saint-Maurice — near Trois-Rivières, using iron ore from a mine twelve kilometres away. France granted the ironworks a licence to supply the royal shipyards in Québec and in France. Everything seemed to be going great.

A bumpy road lay ahead, however. The ironworks had technical difficulties, and didn't turn a profit. Cugnet used his connections as a lawyer with the French government's tax commission to secure an unofficial loan from the colony's government. He was sure, if he could just keep it going, the ironworks would pay everything back and more.

In 1741, Cugnet realized he could do no more. He declared bankruptcy and retired to his seigneurie on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. The French government took over the ironworks, and ran it until 1763, when New France became a British colony. The ironworks stayed in operation until 1883 — in all, more than 150 years.

This shows the ironworks at Saint-Maurice. Today, Trois-Rivières and Saint-Maurice form part of the industrial core of Québec and Canada.





France and the Catholic Church also placed a high priority on converting First Nations to Catholicism. This painting, by Claude François around 1670, shows “France” as a woman who is teaching the faith to a First Nations man. What challenges of coexistence might this situation pose?

New France Who’s Who

The Catholic Church and Clergy

The Catholic Church played an important role in the identity of New France.

In Europe, divisions between Catholics and Protestants had become deep and bitter. People of the two faiths discriminated against each other. For example, Britain was a Protestant country and had laws preventing Catholics from serving in government. Measures such as this made people more aware of the connection between their faith and identity.

The Jesuits — a Catholic religious order — formed a key part of the presence of the Catholic Church in New France. The Jesuits first came to New France in the early 1600s. They established missions among the Mi’kmaq, the Kichesiprini, the Haudenosaunee and the Ouendat to convert these nations to the Catholic faith. Many Jesuits learned and documented First Nations languages.

For forty years (1632–1672), the Jesuits supplied important information about New France and their work through the *Relations*, a sort of annual report. A Jesuit, Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, wrote the first history of New France: *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*. The Jesuits’ writings, written from a European perspective, contain a wealth of information about First Nations peoples and their ways of life in the 1600s and 1700s.

The church also established schools, hospitals and orphanages in New France, and played an important role in governing the colony. The clergy were among a small group of educated people who could read and write. Many people consulted them before making important decisions, including decisions that affected the politics and economy of the colony.

LANGUAGE LIVES!

“T’was in the moon of wintertime, when all the birds had fled.”
Can you sing the tune that goes with the words of this well-known Christmas carol?

These words are a translation. Father Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit priest and missionary in New France, wrote the original carol in 1643, in the language of the Ouendat.

Marguerite d'Youville

1701–1771

The quiet evening welcomes Marguerite d'Youville, standing at the entrance to the Hôpital Général in Montréal. It has been a particularly long day, but Marguerite feels calm and certain in her mission. What a blessing the hospital is! It needs repairs, many repairs, but with God's help it will soon offer refuge to the sick and the elderly, to orphans and the needy. She, and the women who work with her, will be able to help so many more this way.

Marguerite d'Youville was born in New France and married a nobleman in Montréal. She was no stranger to grief: four of her six children died in infancy. Perhaps this spurred her special dedication to her faith and her church.

After her husband died, Marguerite and a group of friends pledged their lives to helping the poor and sick. They became well known for their work.

In 1747, the colonial government of New France asked Marguerite to take over the Hôpital Général in Montréal, which had fallen into disrepair and debt. Marguerite employed the poor and sick in the hospital — those who were strong enough — to sew clothing, make sails and tents, make candles, cure tobacco, and bake bread. She raised money in other ways too, by renting land, and marketing produce from farms her group owned.

Marguerite d'Youville and her fellow workers received official recognition from France and the church in 1753. They became the Sisters of Charity, also known as the Grey Nuns.

The Grey Nuns eventually established many hospitals across Canada, including in Edmonton, Calgary, St. Paul and Lethbridge.



Marguerite d'Youville



The Catholic Church helped the sick and needy — one of its many important roles in the society of New France.

RESPOND

1. Describe two examples of people affected by the policies of the Royal Government of New France. What role did these people play in the society of New France?
2. Describe two examples of people affected by the activities of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 3 Review

WHAT DID CHAPTER 3 EXPLORE?

- How imperialism influenced the development of colonies.
- How French and British colonies in North America were similar and different.
- How colonization affected First Nations peoples.
- What characterized New France.

Check for Understanding

1. Give an example of what European countries aimed to achieve through colonies.
2. Give an example of how New France and the Thirteen Colonies differed in terms of one of the following:
 - Government structure.
 - Economic priorities.
 - Relations with First Nations.
3. Describe some impacts of one of the following on First Nations during European colonization:
 - Epidemics.
 - Imperialism.
 - Missionaries.
4. Describe the role of one the following in the society of New France:
 - Habitants.
 - Merchants.
 - Seigneurs.
 - Catholic Church.
 - Sovereign Council.

Demonstrate your Knowledge

5. Suppose you write an advice column for *History Happens*. How would you answer to the following inquiries from readers during the era of New France?
 - A merchant writes to you asking about the possibilities of “getting ahead” in New France.

- A Cree leader, who has so far had no direct contact with French or British colonists, wants examples of the impacts of colonization on First Nations in eastern North America.
- A young French man, with no connections or property, wants to know what life might hold for him in New France.

Apply your Skills

6. In preparation for its play about New France, the PastLives theatre company needs good information to prepare costumes for its actors. Prepare an inquiry plan that will help the company find good online information.
 - What websites would you recommend? Why?
 - Generate a list of useful keywords or phrases.
 - Describe some advantages to using quotation marks around keywords during an online search.

Take Stock

7. What have you learned about New France? What insights have you gained into the importance of New France to the origins of Canada? Why are the Canadiens — the descendants of the settlers of New France — considered a founding people of Canada?