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## THE ENGLISH AND THE DUTCH

**T**he Dutch and the English looked for opportunities to colonize the north. In 1610, the Dutch settled first on the Hudson River, which Henry Hudson had explored on behalf of the **Dutch East India Company** a few years earlier. They stayed until their colony, New Amsterdam, fell to the English fifty years later.

Like the French, the English were also searching for a Northwest Passage, but they explored the Arctic, claiming territories as they went. The English explorers were often the same daring

**sea dogs** who had attacked the Spanish treasure ships along the coastal waters of northern South America following the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca empires. They included Martin Probisher, William Baffin, and John Davis.

In 1583, an Englishman, Humphrey Gilbert, claimed Newfoundland for England, even though many Portuguese and **Basque** fishers lived there. Gilbert's idea of **diplomacy** was to threaten to cut off the ears of anyone who would not "hear" the king of England's claim.

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## THE FOUNDING OF NEW FRANCE

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### SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN

*I arrived there (Quebec) on July the Third. On arrival I looked for a place suitable for our settlement, but I could not find any more suitable or better situated than the point of Quebec, so called by the natives, which was covered with nut trees.*

—SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN, 1608

After Cartier's failure to establish a permanent French colony, the French limited their activities in Canada to fishing, and trading by shore parties. Later in the sixteenth century, several French expeditions set out to colonize in Canada, but they all failed.

Samuel de Champlain, who was a soldier and navigator, was intensely interested in the Americas. As a captain, he had sailed to the West Indies with the Spanish, and as a soldier he had fought in the religious wars of the **Reformation**. In 1604, he

was made an assistant to the Sieur de Monts. De Monts was a French noble appointed by the king of France to set up trading posts in Canada. He was given a monopoly on the fur trade in return for establishing a French colony. In the summer of 1605, de Monts, Champlain, and approximately sixty settlers had established a small post called "Port Royal" in what is now Nova Scotia.

Port Royal was not a great success. Business was not as brisk as de Monts had anticipated, and eventually he lost his trading monopoly. The settlers built several buildings at Port Royal, including a mill, and planted a number of crops, but the settlement was abandoned by 1607. Even Champlain's cooking club, The Company of Good Cheer, could not hold the group together. A few settlers were permitted to stay on, as long as they agreed not to work the fur trade. They became highly skilled farmers, and would eventually form the colony of Acadia, described in the Window on the Past.

#### **Dutch East India**

**Company:** one of the East India companies chartered by European sovereigns to establish worldwide trading connections

**sea dogs:** English navigators, often pirates

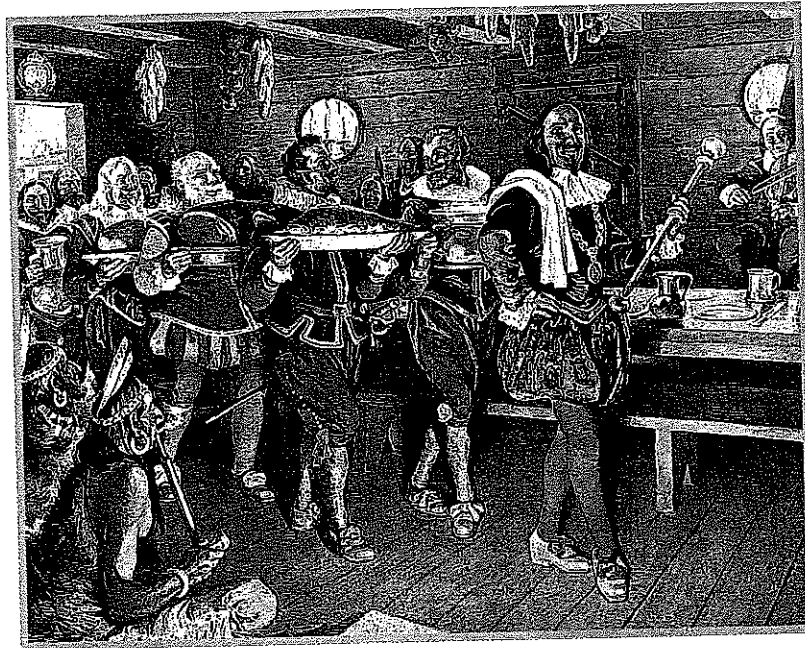
**Basque:** people living near the Bay of Biscay

**diplomacy:** the settling of issues or disputes without giving offence

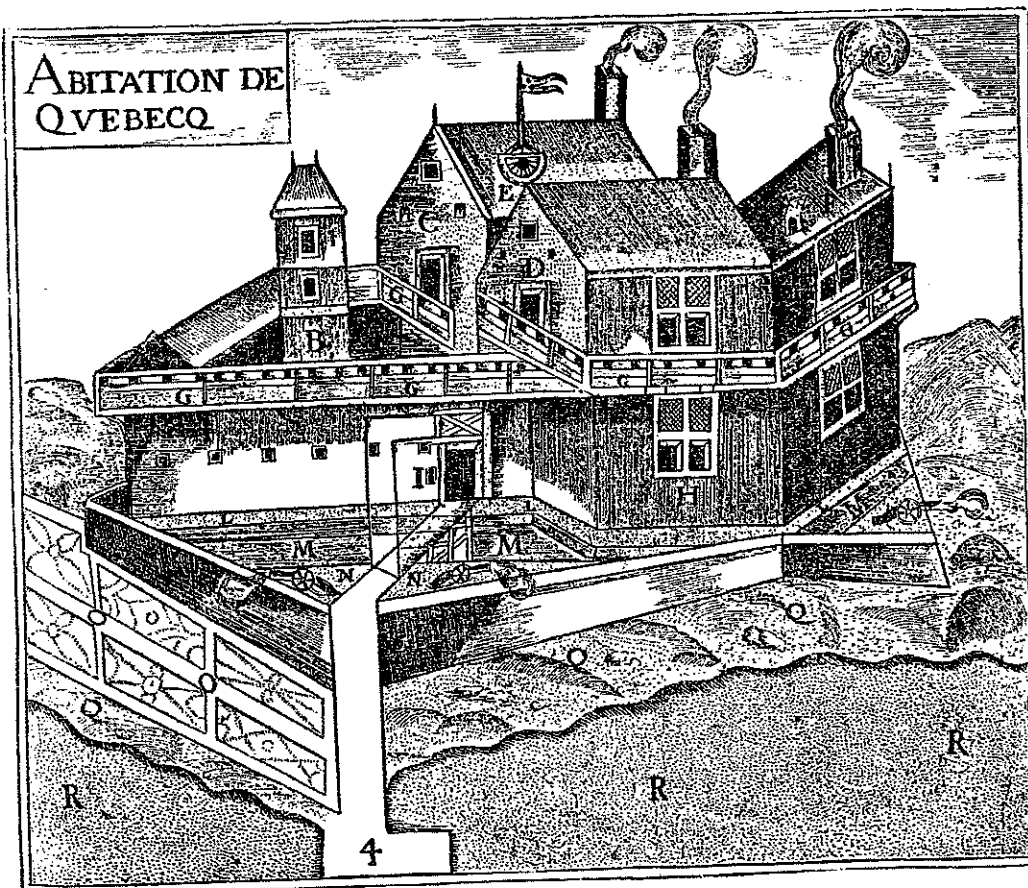
**Reformation:** the period in England in the sixteenth century when the Roman Catholic Church was reformed

Champlain was still convinced that Canada could be profitable. In 1608, he led an expedition up the St. Lawrence. Arriving at what is now Quebec City, he found no evidence of the village of Stadacona, described by Cartier, but he did meet the Algonkians and the Montagnais, Native hunters from the northern forests. His soldier's eye must have noted the advantages of the region. Quebec's towering cliffs provided an almost **impregnable** natural fort.

Champlain established a post—a **habitation**—at Quebec, and allied with the Algonkians and Montagnais against the Iroquois. In return, they agreed not to trade any furs with the English. Champlain also met Hurons from the west, who told him that furs could also be found in their territories. The next year he joined an Algonkian raid against the Iroquois. The firearms of the French helped the Algonkians win several battles.



**Figure 8-8** Champlain's Order of Good Cheer (*Ordre de Bon Temps*) was an ingenious way to keep everyone's spirits up during the long winter months at Port Royal. This portrait shows Champlain playing the role of the Grand Master and leading the procession of cooks to the table. The Iroquois guests are shown looking on. When it came time for them to cook, many residents spent days hunting for the right foods—usually game. In 1946, the *Ordre de Bon Temps de Québec* was established to commemorate the original association and to promote adult education and recreation in Quebec.



**Figure 8-9** Champlain's *habitation* included a warehouse, various storerooms, a building for munitions, and several residences. It was surrounded by a moat. Can you explain why?

**impregnable:** a location which an enemy cannot take by force

**habitation:** residence

## Champlain Chooses Sides

Champlain found himself in the middle of an ongoing war between the Algonkians and Montagnais, on one side, and the Iroquois nations, on the other. In this excerpt from his own account, dated 1610, Champlain describes a battle scene in which the Iroquois were introduced to the firearms of the French. The element of surprise and terror provided by these weapons would not last long. The Iroquois quickly found ways to defend themselves.

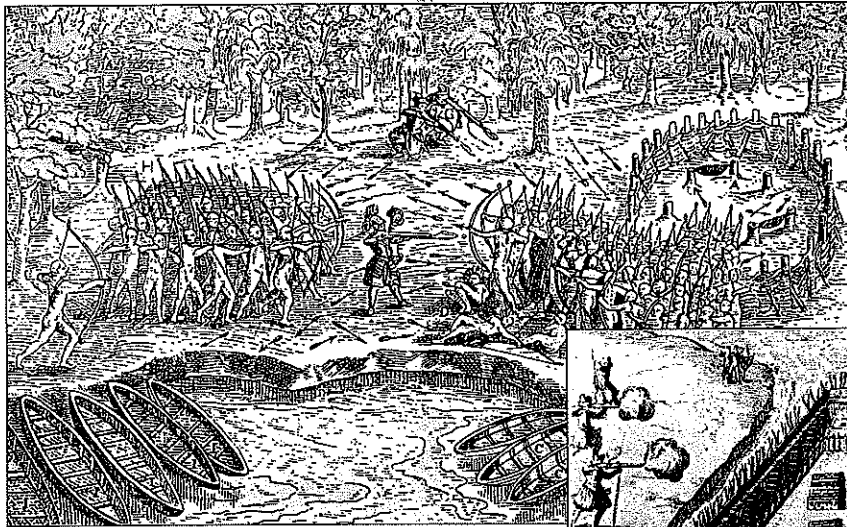
**arquebus:** one of the earliest shoulder-held firearms, an early form of musket

**ally:** one who helps when another attacks or is attacked

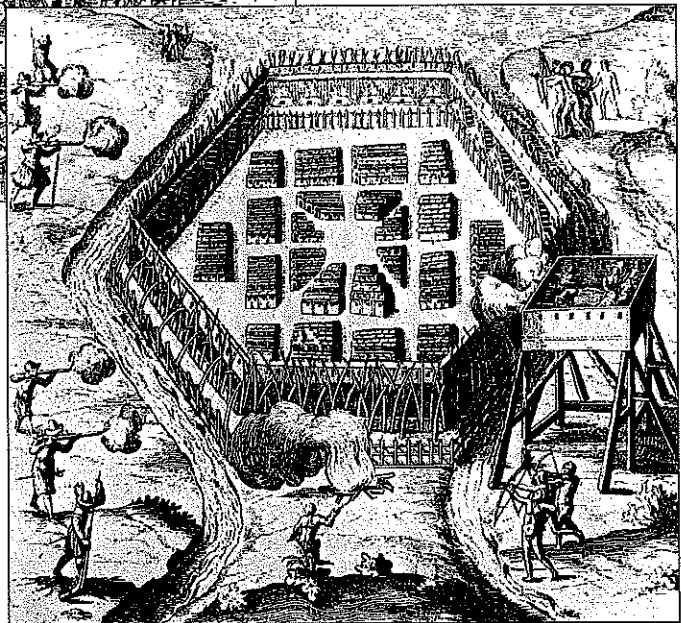
**perspective:** the sense of three dimensions in a flat image

When we had gone about a half league through the thick woods, among swamp and marsh, with water up to our knees, each loaded down with a pikeman's corselet, which bothered us greatly, as did the hordes of mosquitoes, a strange sight, which were so thick that they hardly allowed us to draw our breath, so greatly and severely did they persecute us, we should not have known where we were had it not been for two Indians of whom we caught sight, moving through the bush, to whom we called ... we heard the howls and shouts of both parties flinging insults at each other, and continually skirmishing while waiting for us ... I directed my companions to keep behind me and

not to leave me. I approached the enemy's barricade, ... It was made of strong trees, placed one upon the other, in a circle, which is the ordinary form of their forts. All the Montagnais and Algonkians also approached the barricade. Then we began firing many arquebus-shots through the branches; for we could not see them as they could see us. As I was firing my first shot close to the barricade, I was wounded with an arrow which split the tip of my ear and pierced my neck ... one could see arrows flying on all sides as thick as hail. The Iroquois were astonished at the reports [sounds] of our arquebuses, but most because the bullets pierced better than their arrows ... out of fear, thinking these shots to be irresistible, they would throw themselves upon the ground when they heard the report. Besides, we hardly missed a shot, and fired two or three bullets each time.



**Figure 8-10** These illustrations from the early seventeenth century are based on Champlain's descriptions of warfare between the Algonkians and their French **allies**, and the Iroquois. Notice that the artist is not concerned with realism or **perspective**. The people are much larger and the buildings much shorter than they should be. Look carefully at the engraving above, which depicts the first battle in which Champlain participated. Locate the palm trees, canoes that look like French river skiffs, and a fort that looks like a French sheep pen. Compare this picture to the one on the right, which also depicts an attack on an Iroquois village. Which is probably more accurate? Why?



## AN ALLIANCE WITH THE HURON EMPIRE

The Hurons were closely related to the Iroquois, but had become their enemies. Great traders themselves, the Hurons navigated the rivers of central Canada and were very prosperous. Champlain was eager to form an alliance with them and to use Huron trading connections.

Eventually they would become the leading source of furs for the French.

The Hurons had many economic advantages because of their geographic location. Their territory was located on the southern shore of Georgian Bay, where the fishing was excellent. The vegetation of the region included mixed forests, meadows, and fields. The sandy soil was perfect for planting corn, squash, pumpkins, and beans.

The Hurons lived in communities of 800 to 1600 men, women, and children. Their total population

numbered some 20 000. Their longhouses were designed to house several families and were surrounded by defensive palisades and huge fields.

The Hurons were primarily farmers who lived on their produce. Their diet was supplemented by fish and game from Georgian Bay, the Great Lakes, and local rivers. They did not hunt much, and meat made up less than 10 percent of their diet.

The Huron economy was based on farming, much of it directed by women. Every spring, Huron women would plant enough corn for several years, to insure against drought or to trade. Corn could also be traded to the tribes who lived north of the Canadian Shield, where farming was non-existent. In fact, the Nipissings and Algonkians were eager to trade their furs for corn. Women also collected hemp, a tall herb that is tough and fibrous, and twisted it into twine for fishing nets. Fishing nets were always in demand and could be traded for tobacco, wampum, and black-squirrel skins.

**longhouses:** homes

**palisade:** wall of upright, often pointed, logs

**wampum:** bead belts, used by Native peoples to record events, also used as currency or in exchanges

**Figure 8-11** This picture of a Huron town is very European in style. How can you tell? Identify the longhouses in this picture. Have these been drawn with accuracy? Check an encyclopedia or other source to find out.



## Using a Letter as a Primary Source

In 1615, a Recollet **missionary**, Father Denis Jamet, wrote to the French Cardinal de Joyeuse. The Recollets were a Roman Catholic order of Franciscans who had come to Canada that year. Many missionaries were sent to New France with orders to convert the Native peoples to Christianity.

This letter is not a personal note to Joyeuse. It is more like a bulletin to bring the cardinal up to date on the progress of religious work in New France.

Even though this letter is somewhat official, it is also very plain-speaking. If Jamet had wanted to tell the Hurons what he thought of them, would he have written this letter?

As for the Hurons, they are settled peoples living in large villages near a great lake the other end of which they have never seen .... All religious who go there can expect no comfort. Their food is usually Indian corn cooked in water; for their feasts they have bread baked in hot ashes. They have the advantage that the lake lacks no fish if they want to take the trouble to fish, but they are lazy and content themselves with one dish when they could have two. This is a bit annoying for us Frenchmen. But what matters most is that to win their friendship it would be necessary to live with them helter skelter in their cabins, which is a strange dissatisfaction, as you can imagine, Monseigneur.



### YOUR TURN

1. What line in the letter suggests to you that Jamet expects Joyeuse to agree with him?
2. What lines suggest that Jamet has made value judgements about the Hurons?
3. As a French Catholic missionary living in the early seventeenth century, could Jamet have avoided making these value judgements? Explain.
4. Name other **genres** where it is most likely that you will express your views with complete honesty. What do these genres have in common?

As you might expect, the Algonkians and Montagnais were uneasy about the prospect of Champlain forging links with the mighty Huron nation.

Champlain made many trips back and forth between Canada and France, usually looking for money to back his trading ventures. There were great profits to be made. Hats made from beaver fur—especially **castor gras d’hiver**—were becoming the rage in Europe, and North America seemed to be a place where money could be made. In 1613, Champlain became a partner in a trading company with a monopoly in Canada. By 1616, his partners, the Hurons, were supplying most of the beaver furs along the St. Lawrence.

Champlain began sending out young men, called **coureurs de bois**, to explore the Great Lakes region. They were to live with Native peoples and marry into their communities. Coureurs de bois such as Étienne Brulé travelled far into the interior of the country, guided to Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Superior by Huron allies. In 1615, both Champlain and Brulé accepted an invitation from the Hurons to visit them in their own land, after which Champlain recorded his observations of Huron culture.

Back in Quebec, Champlain struggled to keep his venture going. The company was making good money from furs, but France had little interest in building a settlement. Nor

**missionary:** one who travels to another region to communicate a religious message

**genre:** literary form

**castor gras d’hiver:** prime winter beaver pelt (literally, “greasy winter beaver pelt”)

**coureurs de bois:** runners of the woods

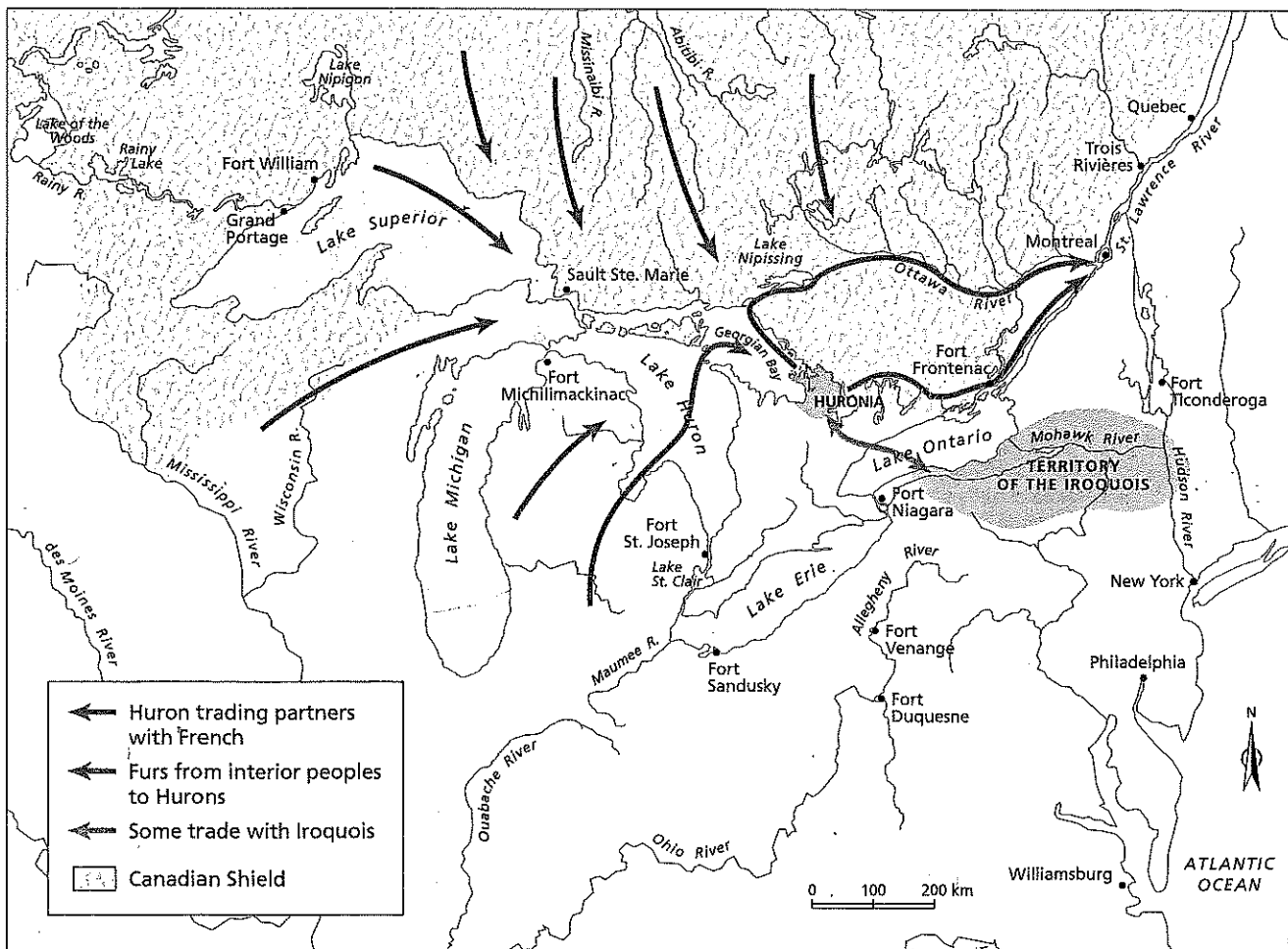
did Champlain. In fact, Champlain tried to stop people from coming to farm at the habitation because he thought this would ruin the trade; worse still, it might create trade outside his monopoly. Some Native allies became annoyed with Champlain. Christian missionaries who had begun to accompany traders to Canada were trying to convert them to Roman Catholicism, and to force them to change their own culture and traditions. When Champlain's colony was attacked by the English Kirke brothers, the Algonkians (and Étienne Brulé) guided the English and refused to help the French. Champlain was captured and taken prisoner. The Algonkians and

Montagnais had turned on the French because they were uneasy about the prospect of Champlain forging links with the mighty Huron nation.

Champlain's colony, however, did not die. When he was in his sixties, a new company—The Company of a Hundred Associates—took over, with strong backing from the most powerful person in France, Cardinal Richelieu. Champlain returned to Quebec and began to rebuild the colony, which had been destroyed by the English. He set up new posts in the Company's name at different places along the river. A few years later, Champlain died on Christmas Day.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 1627, only 107 French people resided in Canada.



**Figure 8-12** The Hurons had built a vast trading empire before the arrival of Champlain, and they expanded it when Champlain arrived. Their activities brought them into conflict with the Iroquois, who were also expanding their territories. From Huronia, canoes travelled between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River, then down to the St. Lawrence. At which point would the Hurons most likely meet Iroquois war parties?