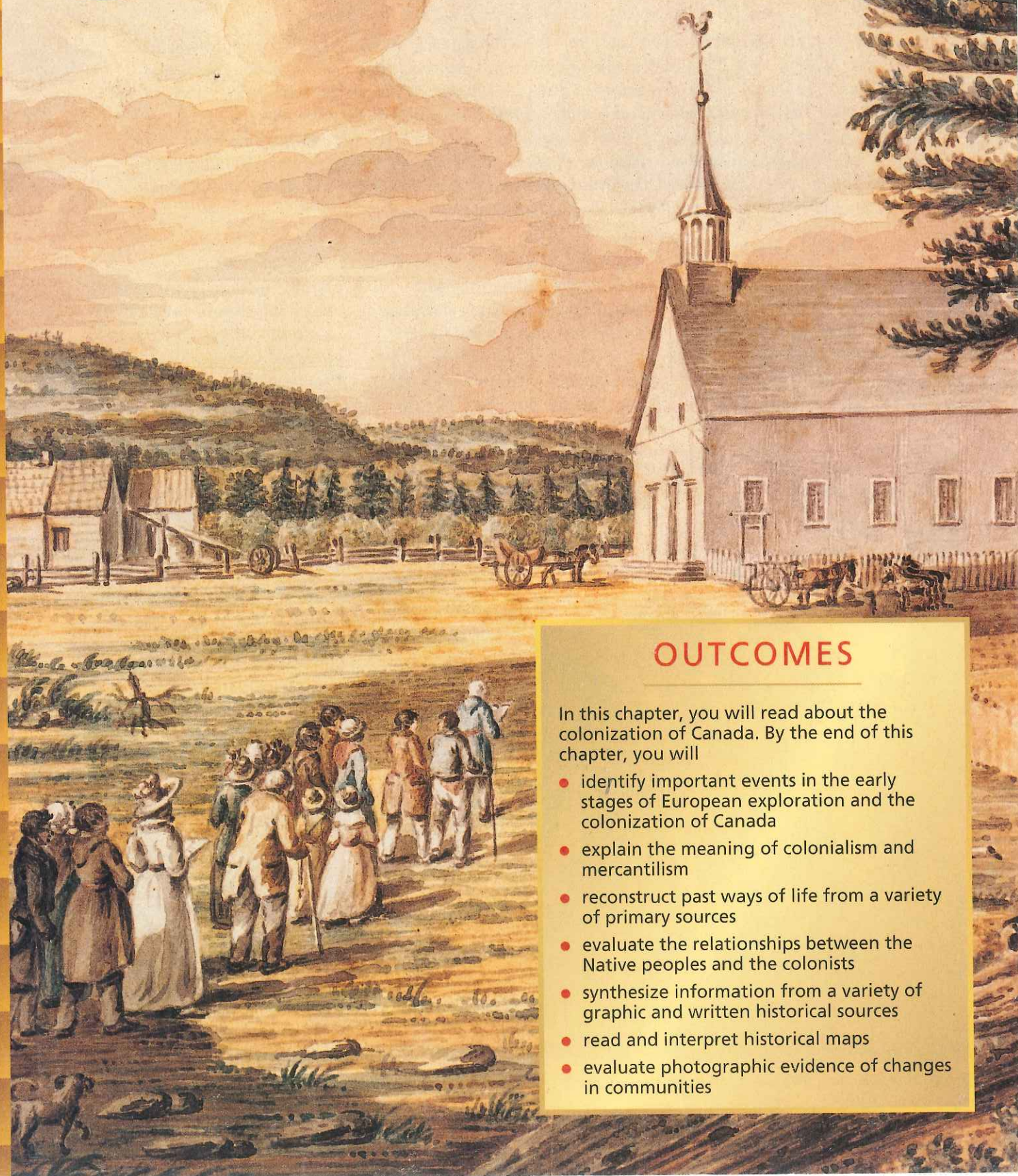


# 8 ARRIVAL IN CANADA



## OUTCOMES

In this chapter, you will read about the colonization of Canada. By the end of this chapter, you will

- identify important events in the early stages of European exploration and the colonization of Canada
- explain the meaning of colonialism and mercantilism
- reconstruct past ways of life from a variety of primary sources
- evaluate the relationships between the Native peoples and the colonists
- synthesize information from a variety of graphic and written historical sources
- read and interpret historical maps
- evaluate photographic evidence of changes in communities

# Gabriel and the Red Cow

*The Acadians were pioneers who came from France in the early 1600s and settled mostly along the coast of Nova Scotia. They built a number of large farming communities on the shores of the Bay of Fundy. The Acadians saw themselves as distinct—separate even from the other French settlers in Canada. They always tried to avoid getting involved in wars between England and France.*

*Acadia was occupied several times by the British, and finally became a British possession after 1713. During the Seven Years' War, the Acadians had to take an oath of unconditional allegiance to Britain. When they refused, the British expelled them from their prosperous farms. This fictional story tells how a young Acadian lost his family during these times.*

**G**abriel shook blood from his hands, and looked out from the stable toward the village and the sea. A moment ago, he had been helping his

father pull a half-formed calf from the red cow. Such a strange day already, and it wasn't even dawn. The red cow had experienced no trouble with her calves before, but she'd lost the

one this morning—months before she should have calved.

In the village, lantern light streamed from many windows. People were tense and fearful. The proclamation had been a



Groups of people made their way down to the beach, pushing carts and carrying whatever they could.

complete surprise. It was true that few in Acadia liked the British, but people had tried to cooperate as best they could. Mostly they just wanted to be left alone. There wasn't much hope that France would help Acadians. Canada was the priority, and everyone in Acadia knew it.

It was unbelievable. A British officer had announced that all Acadians must leave their homes and be sent away. For what crime? They had done nothing. When the meeting broke up, Gabriel's father had come home directly. He could barely speak, brushing tears away as he told the family about the British order. They must leave behind everything they had known and worked for. No, they would not be returning. No, they would not be able to sell their lands first. No, they could not keep their livestock. No, they would not be paid for what they lost. No, they could not pick where they would be sent. No, they could not choose with whom they would be sent. No! No! No!

Frantically, people ran from neighbour to neighbour, asking for advice or support, though it was the same for everyone. Père Joseph had visited just before dark to try to encourage them. Since then, the family had worked through the night, trying to bundle up their most prized possessions. They could only take what they could carry.

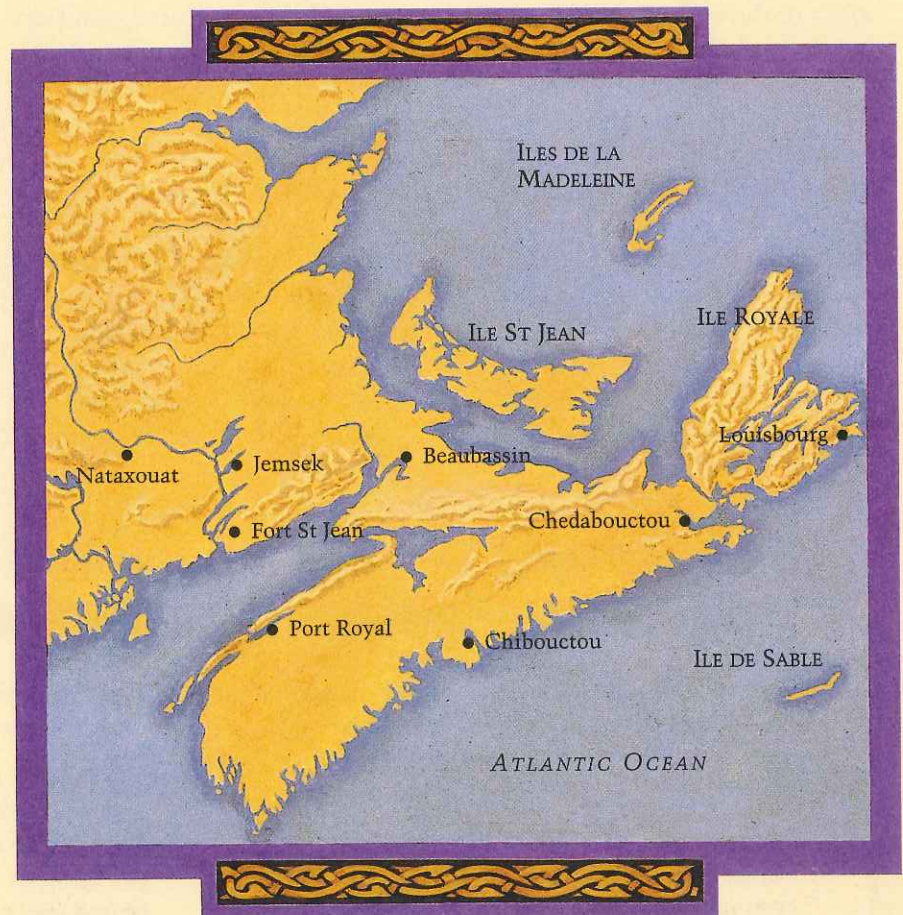
The soldiers landed at dawn and marched directly through the village to the church. From there, patrols were sent out to all the farms. Groups of people began to make their way down the roads to the beach, pushing

small carts and carrying whatever they could. There was little resistance, since no one wanted to put anyone else in danger. The children were already terrified.

Like the others, Gabriel had joined the crowds heading for the beach. That evening, the September breeze was chill and damp. Everywhere, families had gathered around fires. Those who spoke kept their voices low. Many people had already been put aboard ships. Soldiers, none of whom spoke French, had pushed people into the boats, in spite of protests. Families were broken up and even husbands and wives sent to different ships. Children separated from their parents screamed and cried in

vain. Gabriel looked for Constance, his childhood friend. He thought he saw her standing near the water. He called out, and Constance turned to meet him, her eyes glistening with tears.

Quite suddenly the sky began to glow red. Gabriel looked back toward the farm and saw the horizon ablaze. The soldiers must be firing the barns and houses. He had to get back! The red cow was probably still in her stall. He touched Constance on the shoulder and whispered, "Wait for me." Then he turned away, rushed past his horrified family, and ran back up the darkened road. Several times soldiers challenged him, and he was even shot at by a drunken sentry standing near the church.



The colony of Acadia

Gabriel ran through the fields to the farm. None of the farm buildings had yet been set afire, and there seemed to be no soldiers around. It was eerie and quiet, and the red cow was nowhere to be seen. Gabriel heard a noise in the house and went through the open front door to investigate.

Inside, two red-coated soldiers were rummaging through chests, and another was chipping at the plaster with his bayonet. He cursed and called out to the others.

"These farmers'll have money hid somewheres, boys. But look quick—the sergeant will want to see bonfires here in a few minutes."

Gabriel tried to back away, hoping he hadn't been seen. The sight of the soldiers looting the house made him furious.

"Well, here's a boy that could tell us where them valuables is hid." Gabriel was given a hard push from behind, which sent him sprawling into the room. The sergeant aimed a kick at him, but Gabriel rolled aside. The soldier with the bayonet tried to stick him, but lost his balance. Gabriel grabbed his wrists and pulled him to the

floor. Bolting through the door, Gabriel realized that the barn and house were about to go up in smoke. He watched the scene in horror from the relative safety of his father's wood lot.

The morning came, but it brought with it heavy mists from the Bay of Minas. Gabriel pulled himself out from his hiding place. He waited for a long time before he thought it was safe to see what had happened at the farm. The soldiers were gone, but everything was ashes. The house, the barn, the sheds, all burned to the ground—even the crops had been burned. Gabriel was in shock. He could see nothing but desolation. He turned towards the bay, hoping that his family and Constance were still safe.

As the mist cleared, Gabriel saw that the ships had left the bay. Everyone had been taken, and he was alone. Then, a flash of colour? What was that? On a bush, a red ribbon fluttered in the quickening breeze. Gabriel recognized it—the ribbon from Constance's hair. He untied it from the branch, and stood looking at it for many minutes. Where was she now? Where were they all? He had never felt so

alone in his life.

Gabriel knew that he had to make a decision soon. He might try to go northwards towards Louisbourg, but he had no desire to join the militia in that cold and forbidding fortress. Or he could head toward the St. Lawrence and Canada. As he pondered his options, he was pushed roughly from behind. "Shoot me, you fool!" he said, too tired to care. But no shot came.

Gabriel turned slowly, expecting to look into the unshaven face of a British soldier. The red cow stood there calmly chewing her cud. A long tether rope hung around her neck. Clearly, she had escaped too. No doubt, she was to be taken along to feed the British soldiers. Gabriel was delighted to see her, and told her so. "So, all is not lost, my beauty. And now, to Louisbourg?" The cow, bothered by the flies that rose from the seaweed that scattered the beach, shook her head vigorously. Well, at least they were communicating, Gabriel thought. He picked up the end of the tether rope, and the two of them began the long, slow trek to Canada.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Imagine you are an Acadian woman or man. What advice would you give to other Acadians at meetings about taking an Oath of Allegiance to Britain?
2. A story must have a conflict to be interesting. Identify a conflict in this story. How does it help to keep you reading?
3. Does Constance add anything to the story? Explain why or why not.
4. Imagine that you have also escaped the expulsion and meet Gabriel on the trek he is about to take. In conversation, present Gabriel with a plan to get you to the St. Lawrence region. In a paragraph, outline your plan.



## TIME LINE

- 1000 <sup>CE</sup> ● ARRIVAL OF LEIF THE LUCKY IN VINLAND
- 1014 ● FREYDIS ERIKSDOTTIR LEADS EXPEDITION TO VINLAND
- 1497 ● CABOT SAILS TO NEWFOUNDLAND
- 1534 ● JACQUES CARTIER MAKES FIRST VOYAGE TO CANADA
- 1583 ● HUMPHREY GILBERT CLAIMS NEWFOUNDLAND FOR ENGLAND
- 1608 ● CHAMPLAIN FOUNDS THE HABITATION AT QUEBEC
- 1629 ● KIRKE CAPTURES QUEBEC
- 1649 ● DESTRUCTION OF THE HURONIA MISSIONS
- 1687 ● ASSASSINATION OF LA SALLE
- 1692 ● MADELEINE DE VERCHÈRES DEFENDS HER SEIGNEURY
- 1713 ● TREATY OF UTRECHT
- 1731 ● FIRST WESTWARD JOURNEY BY LA VERENDRYE
- 1755 ● EXPULSION OF THE ACADIANS
- 1759 ● BATTLE OF THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM

*It was a finer greeting than ever a father gave to his own child, and it made us marvellously happy. For the men danced in one band, the women in another, the children in another. And afterwards they brought us fish and the bread they make of coarse meal, throwing it into our ships in such quantities that it seemed to fall from the sky.*

**—JACQUES CARTIER, UPON SAILING TO THE VILLAGE OF HOHELAGA IN 1536**

Jacques Cartier was one of the first European explorers to come to Canada. This description of the welcome extended to him by the Iroquois of Hochelaga (modern-day Montreal) seems so positive. As you work through this chapter, consider why the Native peoples of the region would have welcomed Cartier so warmly. What can we learn from this episode in history?

**to colonize:** to settle and control new lands

**middle latitudes:** above the Tropic of Cancer, but below the Arctic Circle

**imperialism:** the policy of extending control of a region or regions by one nation. Imperialism usually involves both economic and political control.

**sagas:** stories of adventure

**artifact:** something made by people

**recreation:** something that is restored like the original

## INTRODUCTION

The years from 1450 to 1600 were Europe's Age of Exploration. Powerful monarchs, beginning with the Portuguese and Spanish, wanted to explore "new worlds" and gain the legendary riches of the East.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus convinced the queen of Spain that he could find a new trade route to Asia. Instead, he landed at San Salvador and began to **colonize** the Americas. It soon became apparent that North America was not part of Asia, but an entirely separate continent.

However, most European explorers continued to hope that exploration would uncover a sailing route *through* North America—a Northwest Passage to Asia. While you may find this notion preposterous, Columbus and other Europeans of his era had no knowledge at all of the interior of North America, nor of its great land mass.

Following the example of Spain, Portugal, and England, France sent its explorers westward in 1534. Avoiding the Spanish to the south and the

English to the north, the French charted a course along the **middle latitudes**. France also wanted to discover the passage that would link the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

While the St. Lawrence River did not lead to Asia, the French did come to Canada, where they found a land rich in many natural resources, including furs. The French stayed in Canada and built a great commercial empire around the fur trade that brought enormous profit to France. This economic **imperialism** was not unique to France, but a feature of all European empires that began to develop during this era.

In Canada, the French came into contact with long-established Native communities, who gave them access to ancient trading networks. They built a successful colony in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes area, called "New France." In the Maritimes, their colony was known as "Acadia." These two colonies became an important part of the foundations of modern Canada.

## THE VIKINGS

Landings long before the French, the Vikings were most likely the first explorers of Canada. They came from Scandinavia, the modern countries of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. They were farmers in their homeland, and very warlike. Before 1000, many Vikings left their small farms to look for new opportunities. Some raided Europe, causing great destruction wherever they went. Others sailed their long-ships westward.

By the beginning of the eleventh century, the Vikings had completely colonized Iceland and had small settlements on Greenland. Next, the Vikings reached the shores of North America and briefly settled there. Although some historians believe that the Irish or others found their way to North America before the Vikings, there is no firm evidence that such journeys took place.

Evidence for Viking landings in North America is found in historical



**Figure 8-1** This Parks Canada recreation of the Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows is in northern Newfoundland, the likely location of Leif Erikson's Vinland. The site was discovered by Helge and Anne Ingstad, who found some Viking artifacts there. How would you check to make sure that the site had been occupied by Vikings, and that the artifacts had not been brought there by Native peoples?



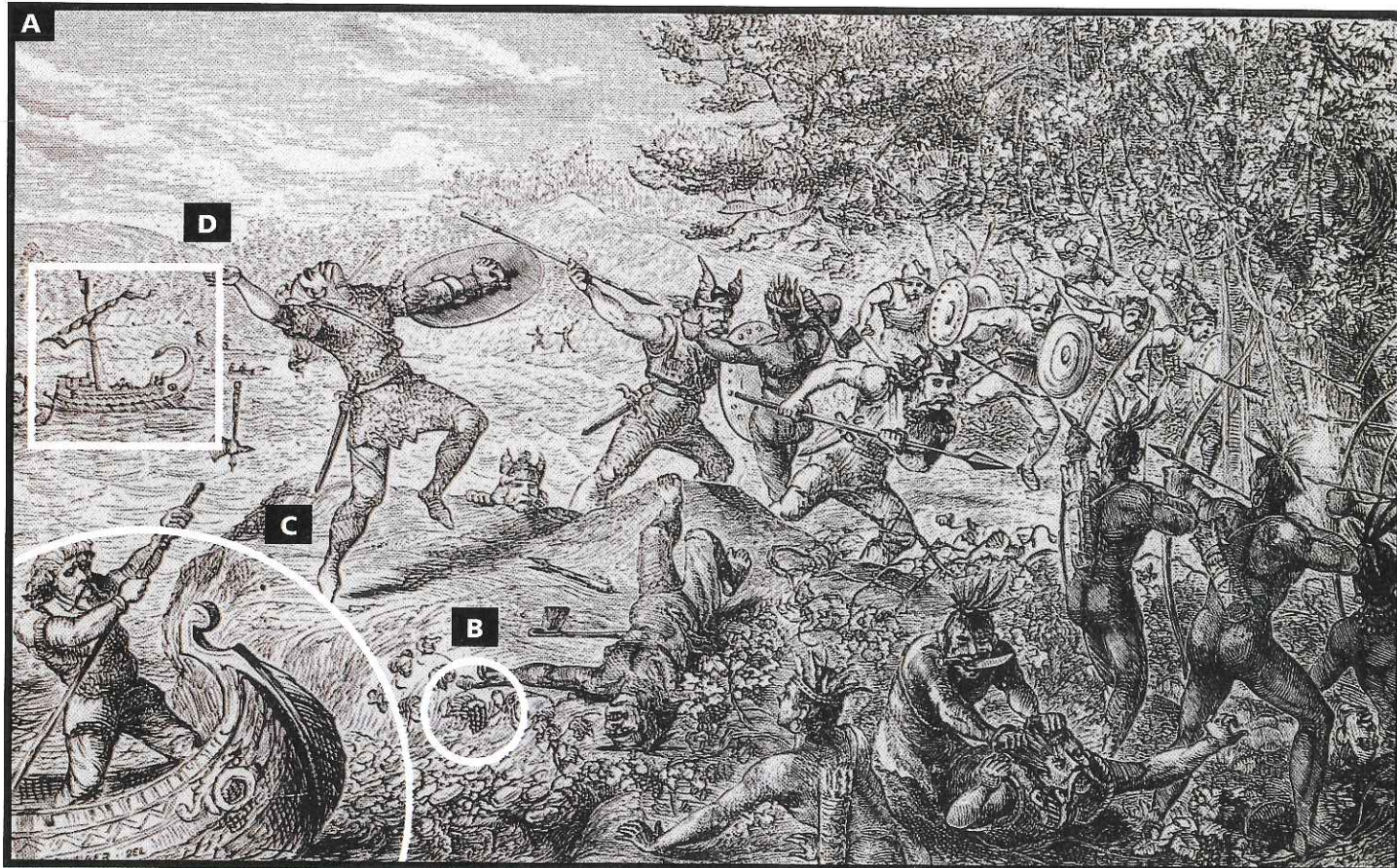
stories known as the **sagas**—especially those from Iceland. They told of voyages by Leif Erikson, sometimes called “Leif the Lucky,” to places he called Helluland, Markland, and Vinland. For many years, historians wondered about the actual locations of these landings. Some thought Vinland was a southern region where vines actually grew. Others thought that Leif had landed in Newfoundland when the climate was warmer. The discovery of Viking **artifacts** and the remains of Viking-style buildings at L'Anse aux Meadows, in Newfoundland, have convinced many historians that Vinland was really northern Newfoundland.

Too few Vikings came to North America to build a permanent community. Thorfinn Karlsefni brought three ships and a few hundred people as settlers—possibly to L'Anse aux Meadows—but left within a few years. Freydis Eriksdottir led an expedition to Vinland in 1014. Her attempt to establish a settlement also failed.

From the beginning, the Vikings were in conflict with local Native peoples. Having no qualms about attacking and killing anyone they found, they were in turn attacked in force and driven off. In time, even the settlements in Greenland were forgotten by Europe, and they mysteriously disappeared.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

*Freydis Eriksdottir, daughter of Erik the Red, led a Viking expedition to Newfoundland in the early eleventh century. According to one saga, Freydis made fun of several Viking soldiers as they retreated from a Native attack. Despite being pregnant, she told them: “If I only had weapons I could make a better fight than any of you.” She followed them to the edge of the forest, where she discovered a dead Viking soldier, picked up his sword, and began to fight.*



**Focal Point A**

The picture resembles the “last stand” scene of an adventure novel or Hollywood movie. Illustrations of this type were used in textbooks as well as works of fiction as recently as fifty years ago.

**Focal Point B**

In the foreground are bunches of grapes, to prove to the viewer that the setting is Vinland, where grapes grow.

**Focal Point C**

This boat is a fairy-tale craft. It bears little resemblance to a real Viking ship.

**Focal Point D**

This boat is an ancient Greek galley, a long, narrow ship propelled by oars. The galley was built for sheltered seas, not crossing an ocean. The Vikings would not have used such a ship.

**Figure 8-2** Illustrations of historical events are often **romanticized**. This picture of the Viking landing in Newfoundland is based on fact. The Vikings did **ambush** the sleeping men and women they encountered on the shores of Newfoundland, and Thorald, Leif’s brother, was later attacked and killed. But the illustration is also misleading. Examine all the circled elements and read the accompanying text. Then decide: Does this picture help us understand the history of the Vikings in North America in any way?

**romanticized:** made gentle, happy

**ambush:** trap

**monopoly:** completely control of the market for a certain good or service

**Letters Patent:** royal documents that set out terms and permission

**heathen:** not-Christian

**infidel:** non-believer, in this case, non-Christian

**ACTIVITIES**

1. So far as we know, the Vikings stopped visiting North America in the eleventh century. Imagine you belong to a small Viking community which was left behind by the last ships. Write part of a saga describing your experiences in North America. Give your saga a memorable name.



## DID YOU KNOW?

1997 marked the five-hundredth anniversary of John Cabot's voyage to Newfoundland. An English team sailed in an exact reproduction of the *Mathew* to North America. People followed the voyage of the *Mathew* by consulting an internet web site every day. The governments of Canada and Newfoundland spent \$20 million on the project, which involved 1400 artists and seventy-five major events.

# FISHERS AND FREEBOOTERS: EARLY EUROPEAN ARRIVALS

**A**t the end of the fifteenth century, Spain and England were trying to break Portugal's **monopoly** on trade with Asia. No one knew that other continents lay to the west. Columbus's journey launched the competition among European nations to open trade routes to Asia by going across the Atlantic.

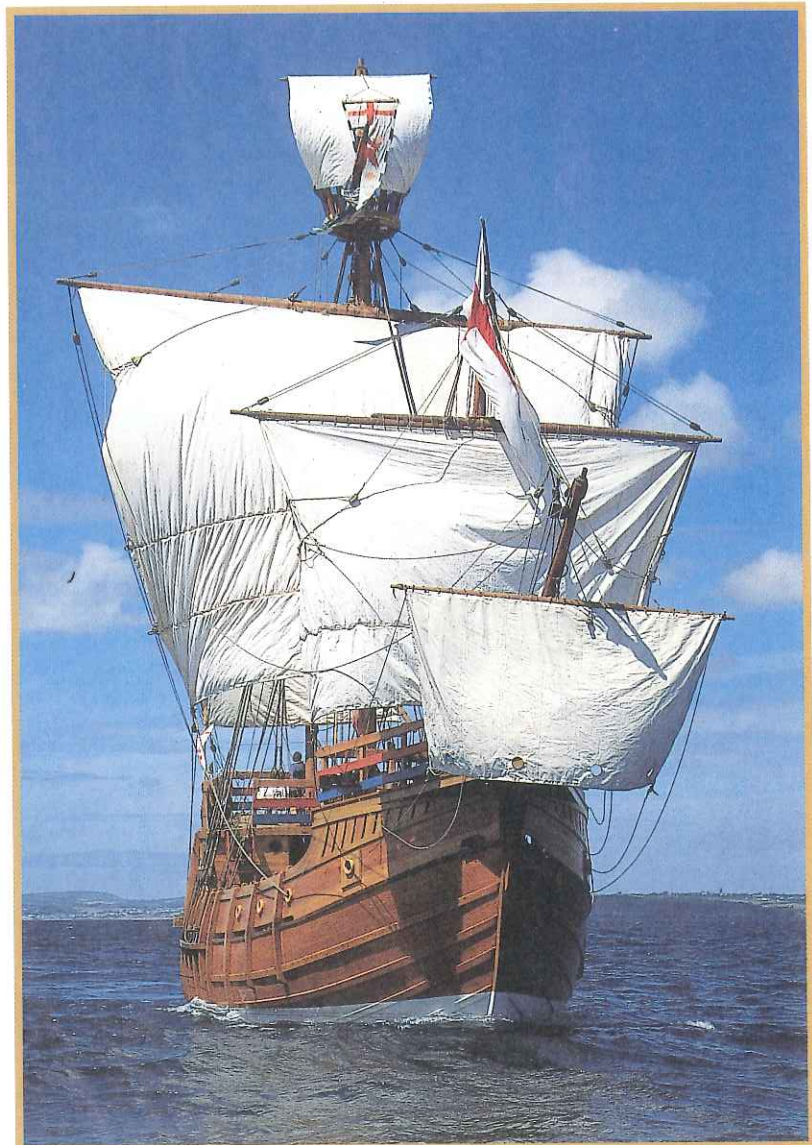
In 1497, Henry VII of England gave John Cabot, an Italian, permission to explore the North Atlantic in the hopes of finding the riches of Asia. Cabot's licence—his **Letters Patent**—gave him the right to “seek out, discover, and finde whatsoever isles, countreys, regions, or provinces of the **heathen and infidel**” and to “subdue, occupy, and possesse all such townes, cities, castles and isles of them found.” Cabot first set sail with a single small ship—the *Mathew*—and nineteen crew members. He expected to find Japan and China.

During his voyage, Cabot sailed against the prevailing winds (winds blow from the west in the northern hemisphere). As he drew closer to Newfoundland, he probably picked up the Labrador Current, which flows down toward Newfoundland. The crew of the *Mathew* undoubtedly found themselves on a rocky, forbidding coast. Cabot landed and, as

instructed by the king, claimed the “New Found Land” for England.

Cabot was astonished by the great schools of cod fish on Newfoundland's Grand Banks. Following his voyage, English, French, and Portuguese ships also travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Figure 8-3** A reproduction of the *Mathew* was built to honour the five-hundredth anniversary of John Cabot's voyage to North America. It made the same ocean crossing as the original.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Grand Banks extend northeast and southwest some 480 kilometres and are 320 kilometres wide. In its heyday, the Grand Banks were the most important cod-fishing region in the world, attracting approximately 100 000 fishers a year. Today, the Grand Banks cod fishery is endangered, with stocks dangerously depleted by over-fishing and environmental changes.

## Life in an Early Fishery

By the early 1500s, European fishing fleets were regularly summering along the Atlantic coast of Canada to fish for cod and trade with the local Native peoples. Europeans required a great quantity of fish. Much of Europe was still Roman Catholic, and Catholics frequently abstained from meat. During the early part of the sixteenth century, there were a total of 165 meatless days in the Church calendar! The most popular fish was young, lightly salted, dried cod. Cod has a very mild flavour, which probably accounted for its popularity.

Many risks were associated with a fishing expedition to the Grand Banks. It took twenty days to reach Newfoundland from Europe, and all the work had to be done in the short northern

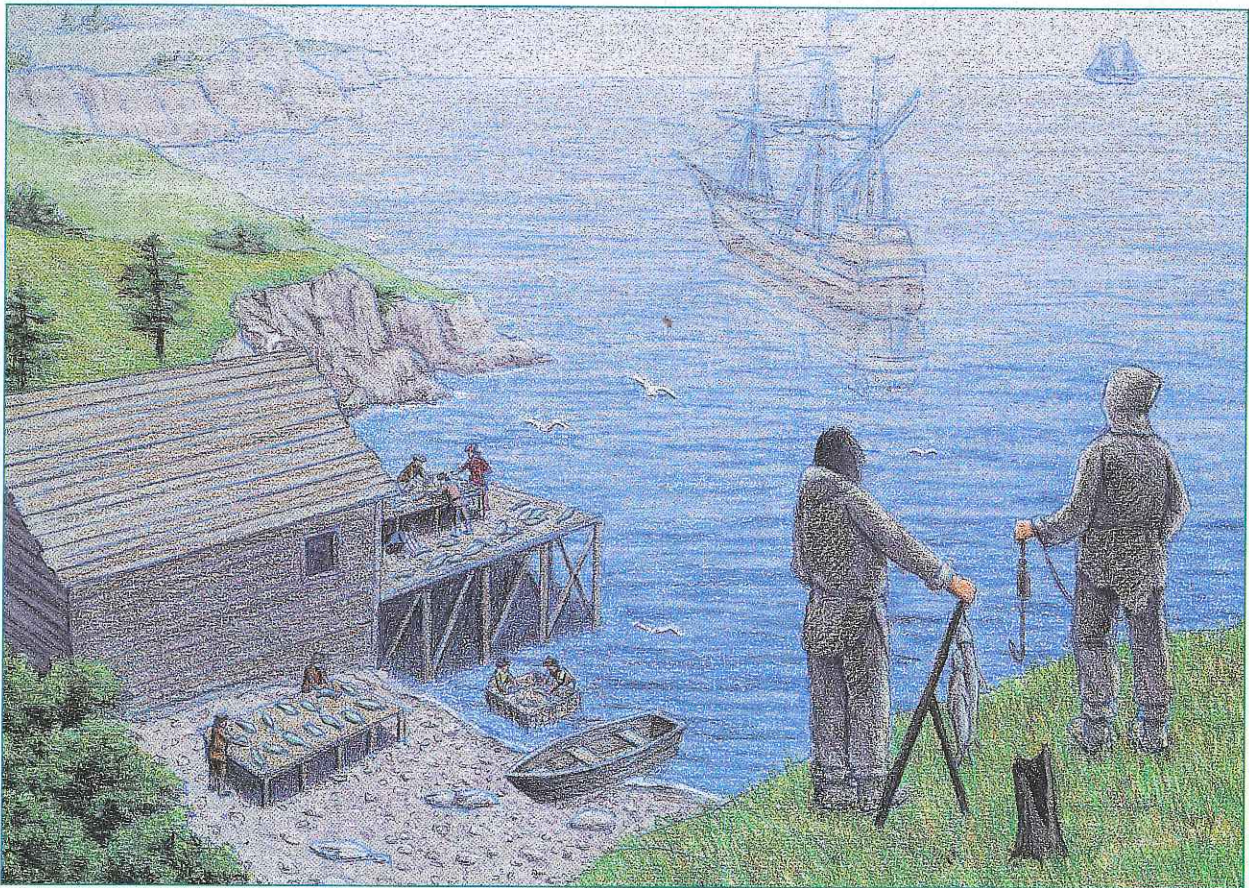
summer—it was simply too cold to fish in winter. Fishing in the region was also hazardous. There was persistent fog because of the meeting of two currents—one warm, one cold. The warm Gulf Stream sweeps along the eastern edge of the Banks, and occasionally its southern edge, while the Labrador Current cools the waters to the north and west. The Banks are also in the path of glaciers carried down by the Labrador Current. Still, these risks were more than offset by the profits to be made on a fishing expedition.

Because fish had to be preserved—either by drying or salting—fishers set up camps. They also explored, looking for bait fish and animals to hunt, adding to European knowledge of the Canadian east coast. Since the

Portuguese and French fishers had access to cheap salt from the Bay of Biscay, off France's west coast, they did not always come ashore. But the English dried their fish on the shores of the Grand Banks and spent the short summer season there.

A small number of Native people were kidnapped by the Europeans who came to the Grand Banks during this period. Some were sold as slaves in Lisbon; three were sent to England, along with a hawk and an eagle, where they were displayed as curiosity items. For the most part, however, relations between the Europeans and the Native peoples during this early period were marked by a spirit of cooperation.

**Figure 8-4** An early scene along the Grand Banks. Identify as many activities as you can by reviewing the text.



## ACTIVITIES

1. John Cabot was lost at sea. Draw a memorial tombstone for him complete with a brief description of his accomplishments.
2. We have no written records of what Native peoples thought when they encountered Europeans for the first time. Imagine that you are an elder in a Native community. You must decide whether or not to cooperate with the Europeans who have arrived on the Grand Banks. Draw up a list of pros and cons to assist you and your community in this decision.
3. Brainstorm a list of three or four natural resources that are in demand today because of custom or fashion. They can be edible, but they do not have to be. Is the environment suffering because of human demand for these things?

## THE FRENCH EXPLORERS

### JACQUES CARTIER AND THE IROQUOIS

In 1524, France sent Giovanni Verrazano to find the fabled Northwest Passage to Asia. Verrazano sailed the coast of North America between Newfoundland and Florida, discovering that North America was not an **archipelago** of islands, as many believed, but a real continent. The king of France was disappointed by Verrazano's failure and did not launch any new expeditions.

Ten years later, a new king asked Jacques Cartier, one of Verrazano's officers, to continue looking for the Northwest Passage. Twenty days after sailing from Saint Malo, Cartier sighted Labrador and Newfoundland. He then sailed south to what are now Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Upon reaching the Gaspé Peninsula, he claimed the territory for France. He kidnapped Taignoagny and Domagaya, the sons of a local Iroquois chief, and returned home.

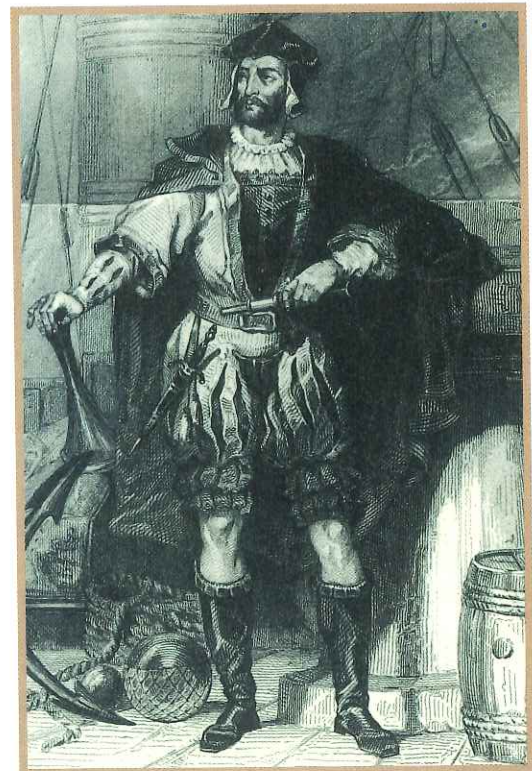
The following year, Cartier returned to explore the great river he

had noticed on his first journey—the St. Lawrence. For guides, Cartier relied on Taignoagny and Domagaya. Although they had been taken from their home, the brothers probably agreed to be guides because they saw great trade possibilities emerging from an alliance with the French. They told Cartier of a fabulous land, the kingdom of the Saguenay, where people wore gorgeous clothes and golden jewellery.

The journey along the St. Lawrence was treacherous. The banks of the river were forbidding, and great cliffs of barren rock loomed over the tiny caravels. But this landscape gradually gave way to open farm land and Native villages. At last, the little fleet arrived at the community of Stadacona, near present-day Quebec City.

**archipelago:** a group of islands

Figure 8-5 Jacques Cartier



## Kidnapped Tour Guides

When Cartier arrived in Stadacona, he was greeted the following day by Donnaconna, the father of his Iroquois guides. Cartier described the landing in his journal. Notice that he is not embarrassed to admit that two young men were kidnapped. As you are reading this document, note Cartier's language. What does it suggest about his attitude to the Iroquois?

After we had cast anchor between this large island and the north shore, we went on land and took with us the two Indians we had seized on our former voyages. We came upon several of the people of the country who began to run away and would not come near, until our two Indians had spoken to them and told them that they were Domagaya and Taignoagny. And when they knew who it was, they began to welcome them, dancing and going through ceremonies. And some of the headmen came to our long-boats, bringing us many eels and other fish, with two or three measures of Indian corn, which is their bread in that

country, and many large melons. And during that day many canoes filled with the people of the country, both men as well as women, [who] came to our ships to see and welcome our two Indians. The Captain received them all, and treated them to what he had to offer. And to ingratiate himself with them, he gave them some small presents of little value, at which they were much pleased. On the morrow, the lord of Canada, named Donnaconna (but as chief they call him Agouhanna), came to our ships accompanied by many Indians in twelve canoes....



**scurvy:** a terrible, often fatal, disease caused by a lack of vitamin C

**immunity:** resistance to disease

**Sieur:** lord

**pyrites:** a common mineral with a pale brass-yellow colour

**treachery:** being false, betraying someone

Cartier did not stay at Stadacona—a relatively small community. Ignoring Donnaconna's advice, he sailed further up the St. Lawrence to the a much larger town called "Hochelaga," where Montreal now stands. Cartier returned from his journey feeling less confident that he could reach China via the St. Lawrence. He prepared to spend the winter at Stadacona.

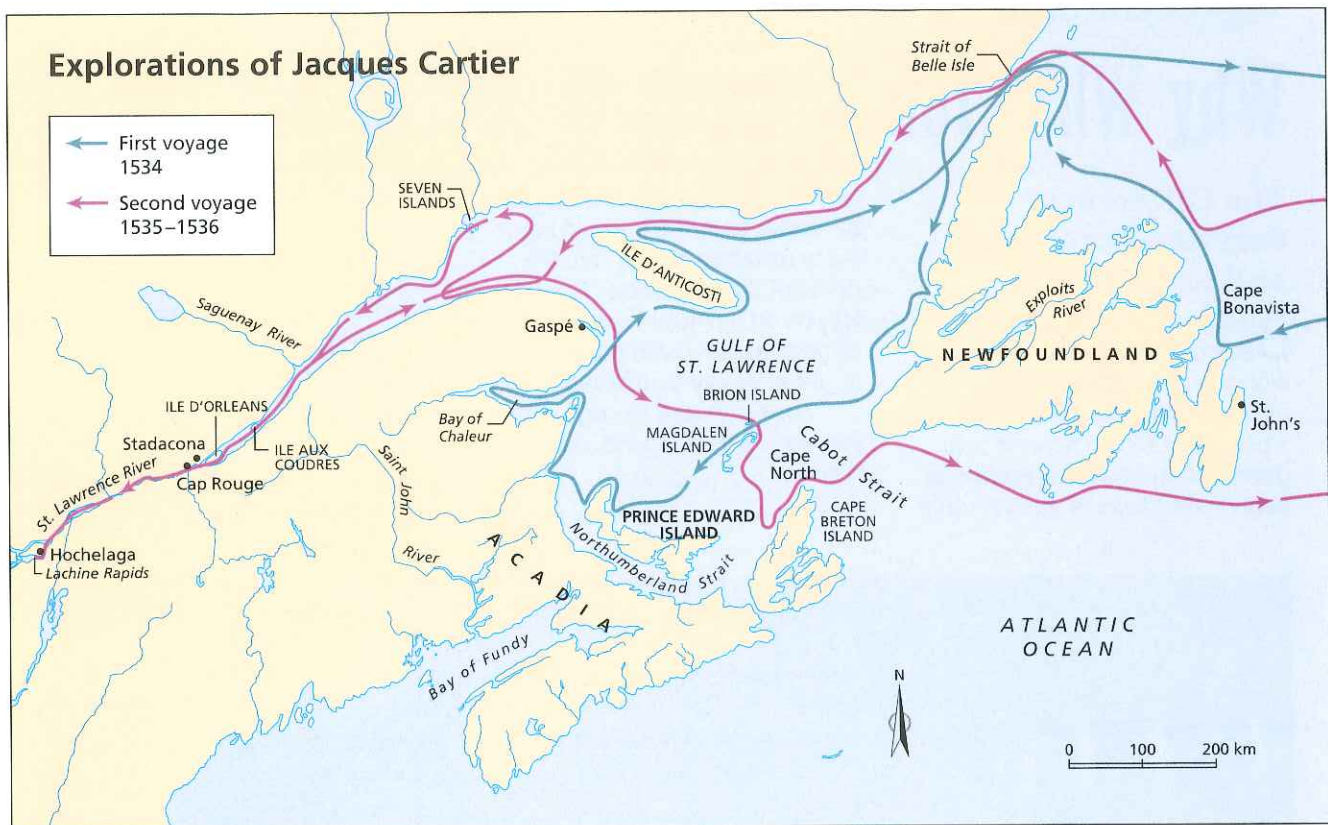
Relations between the French and the Iroquois were now strained. Unprepared for the ordeal, the French spent a miserable winter, and twenty-five sailors died of **scurvy**. Domagaya showed Cartier how to make a Vitamin-C-rich tea of spruce bark and needles, which saved many lives. When weather permitted, Cartier returned to France, kidnapping Donnaconna and nine other Iroquois. Within six years, all the Iroquois had died in Europe from diseases for which they had no **immunity**. None ever saw their home land again.

In France, King Francis I listened eagerly to Cartier and Donnaconna.

Believing that Cartier's explorations might lead to wealth and territory for France, he approved a third expedition, to begin 1541. This time, a noble—the **Sieur de Roberval**—was authorized to establish a French colony in North America. Roberval set sail a year later, in 1542. Both expeditions failed. By this time, the Iroquois were justifiably suspicious of the French, who now built their forts some distance from the town.

In the spring of 1542, Cartier loaded his ship with barrels of Canadian "diamonds and gold"—actually worthless quartz crystals and iron **pyrites**—and went to meet Roberval, who was arriving in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Against orders, he left Roberval and set sail for France. Roberval was left to spend the winter alone and lost fifty settlers. Disgusted by French **treachery**, the Iroquois refused to trade food, and threatened war.

The French effort to colonize Canada had, for the time being, failed utterly.



**Figure 8-6** The routes of Cartier's two voyages

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FUR TRADE

Cartier's "diamonds" did little to persuade French business people, nobles, and monarchs to invest in Canada. Yet these were the very people who wanted to exploit the new colony. In the eyes of the French, the colony existed primarily to raise money for the home country, not to open up new areas for settlement. However, soon another source of potential wealth emerged.

Europeans were still making good money fishing, but even more profits could be made from beautiful furs that were so coveted in Europe—wolf, fisher, marten, lynx, and other animals. These furs were used to decorate the clothing and bedding of wealthy Europeans. Traders could pick up **fancy** furs at bargain prices in

the new colony.

The Native people also liked the idea of trading furs. There were so many fur-bearing animals, and their pelts were easy to obtain. European trade goods, however, were not commonly available to them. Of course, the monetary value of the furs was far greater than the value of items desired by the Native people—knives, hatchets, pots, and beads. For example, one trader's report showed that he had "netted, from an outlay of £4 in 'trifles,' a cargo valued at £130, which included dressed and painted deerskins, sealskins, fisher, otter, lynx, and enough beaver to make six-hundred hats."

However, everyone was satisfied with the exchange for the time being. In the early years, both the Native people and the Europeans viewed the fur trade as a supplement to their primary income from fishing and hunting.

**fancy:** a trade term used to describe certain furs

# Why What You Think is What You See

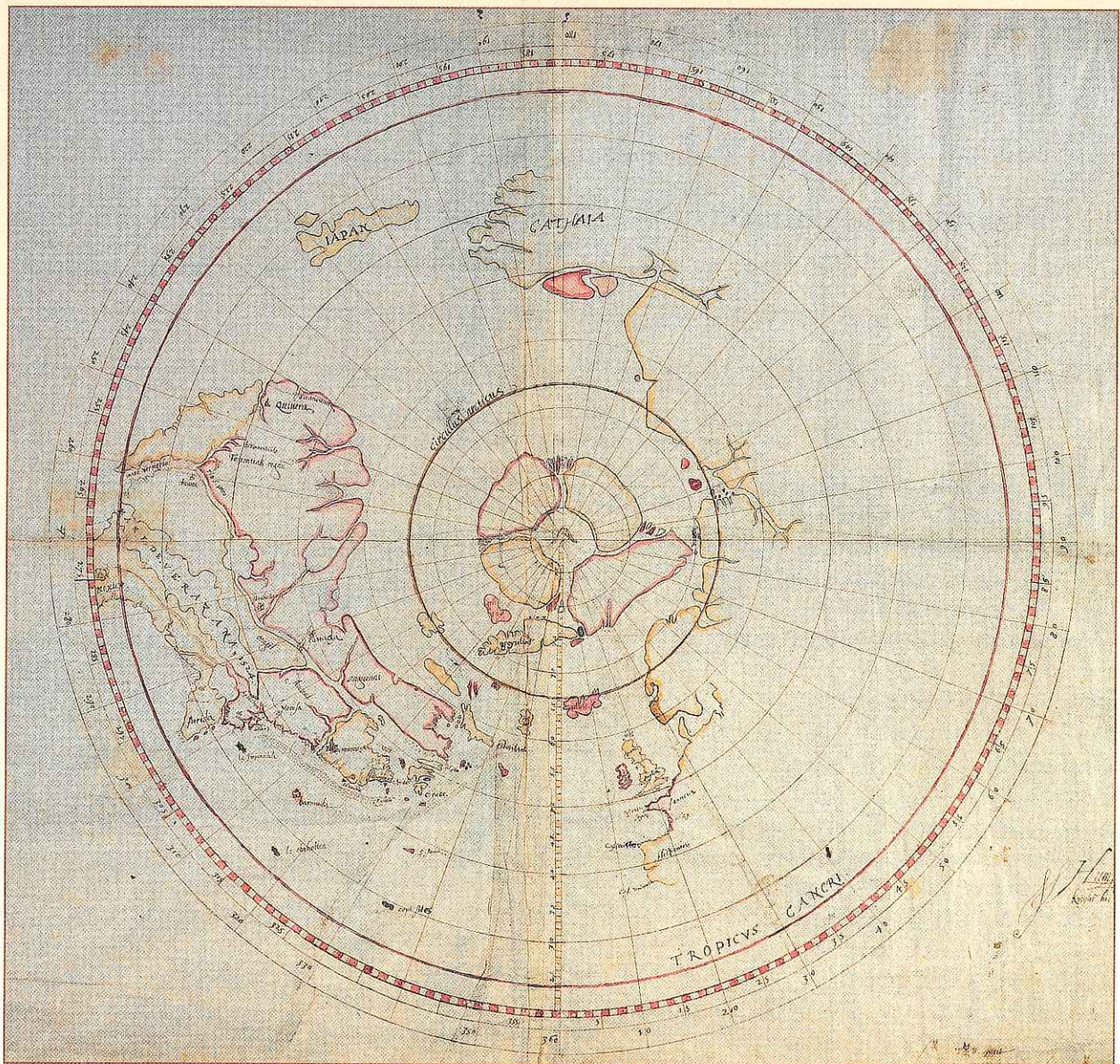
## The Difference Between Perception and Reality

By now you have read that many European explorers, beginning with John Cabot, were convinced of the existence of a Northwest Passage to China. They and their governments had good reasons to believe this theory. If an easy route

to China and the rest of Asia could be found, then there would be many rewards. At long last, the riches of the East would flow to Europe on a regular basis—something that could not be achieved by overland routes.

The Northwest Passage was just waiting to be found, or so it seemed.

**Figure 8-7** This map, dated 1852, was drawn by English sea-farer Sir Humphrey Gilbert. It represented his own opinion about the shape of North America. The map led explorers to believe that they could easily sail around the continent to China (Cathay) and Japan. The French had similar maps. It is easy to see why Cartier was anxious to follow the St. Lawrence River, which he believed would ultimately lead to the Pacific.



Have you ever noticed that when everyone believes something, that is all they see? For example, if you are lying on the grass with your friends gazing up at the sky and one of you muses aloud that a certain cloud resembles her dog Oscar, what will happen next? Now that your friend has said the cloud resembles a dog, you may find that the shape of a dog is all you can see. Similarly, if you decide that another cloud resembles your guitar, or your skateboard, you won't be able to get that image out of your mind.

This very human trait is rooted in **perception**. How you perceive the world is based on many factors, including your background knowledge, biases, and even the most recent suggestions made to you—for example, the suggestion that a cloud resembles a dog.

While our perception of reality often differs from reality itself, we have no choice but to perceive the world through our own personal lens. After all, we're human.

How does any of this relate to the European explorers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

Let's go down the following list:

**Background knowledge:** The Europeans had no firm background knowledge about North America. No one really knew what it looked like or how large it was. Therefore, it was possible that the Northwest Passage could exist, because no one said it didn't.

**Bias:** The European explorers and monarchs were biased in favour of the Northwest Passage because it suited their **agenda**.

**Immediate Suggestions:** When people viewed Humphrey Gilbert's map of the polar regions (Figure 8-7), which claimed to prove the existence of a Northwest Passage, or maps similar to it, they were reminded all over again that the

Northwest Passage existed.

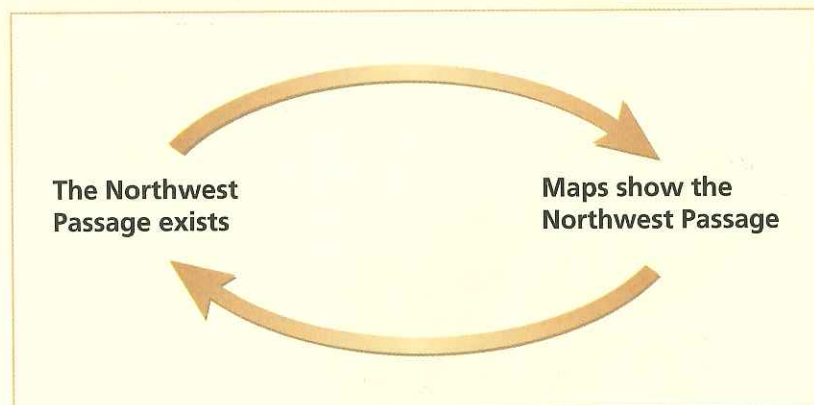
In other words, there was a kind of **feedback loop** of false information. It looked something like the diagram shown below.

The dream of the Northwest Passage to China would eventually evaporate, as the reality of geography took its place. Like all dreams, it was hard to let go. On the plus side, reality kept map-makers busy for the next 200 years.

**perception:** looking

**agenda:** things to be done

**feedback loop:** a model that displays how realities are interdependent, in other words, how each depends on the existence of the other for its own existence



## YOUR TURN

1. Name other examples from history in which "what they thought was what they saw." Could human beings possibly have a false concept of the earth or the universe today? Explain.
2. How do groups like the Flat Earth Society—people who say the earth is flat—maintain their beliefs in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary: for example, pictures of the Earth taken from space?
3. Feedback loops help us to see reality as a system. They can be about almost anything, and range from simple to complex. Create a feedback loop for a series of events in your life. To get you started, here is another example:



## THE ENGLISH AND THE DUTCH

The 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 Frobisher, 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.

## THE FOUNDING OF NEW FRANCE

### 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

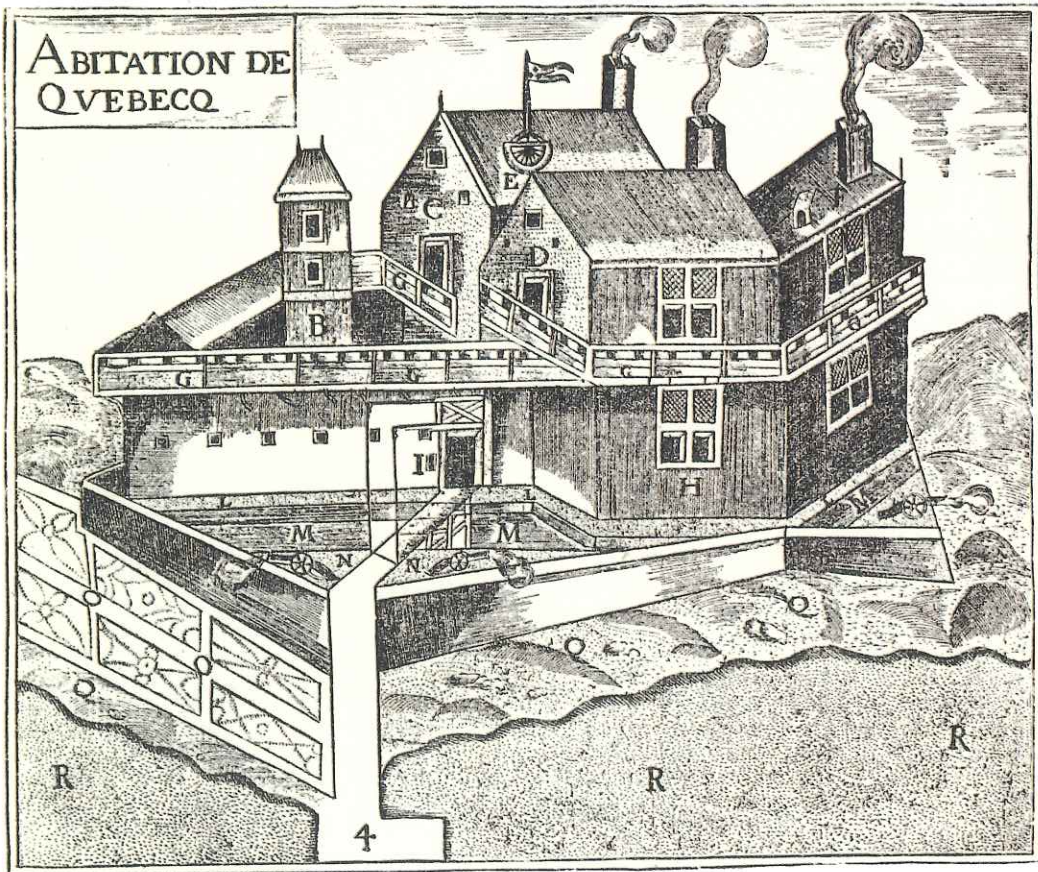


Champlain was still convinced that Canada could be profitable. In 1608, he led an expedition up the St. Lawrence. Arriving at what is now Quebec City, he found no evidence of the village of Stadacona, described by Cartier, but he did meet the Algonkians and the Montagnais, Native hunters from the northern 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 habitat 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.

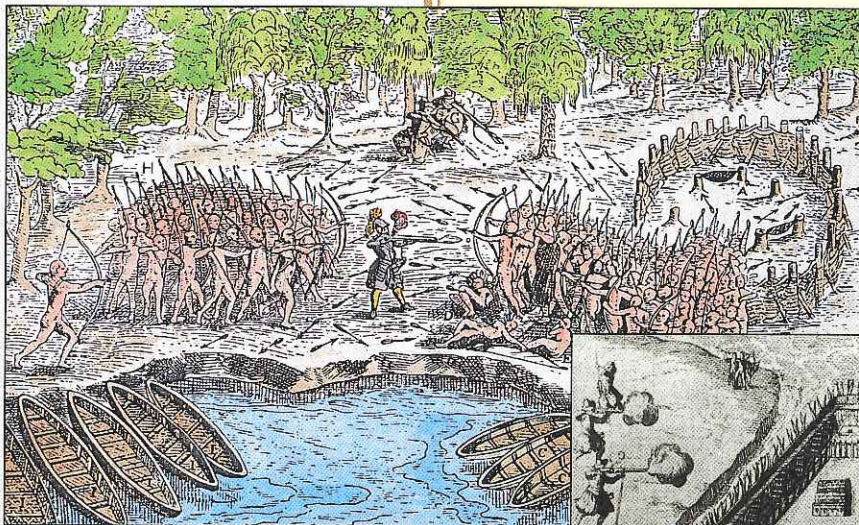
**arquebus:** one of the earliest shoulder-held firearms, an early form of musket

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

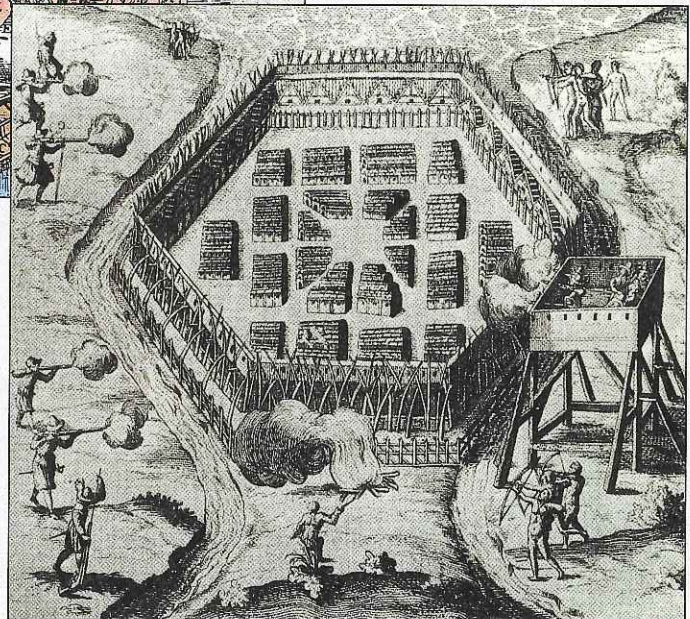
**perspective:** the sense of three dimensions in a flat image

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.

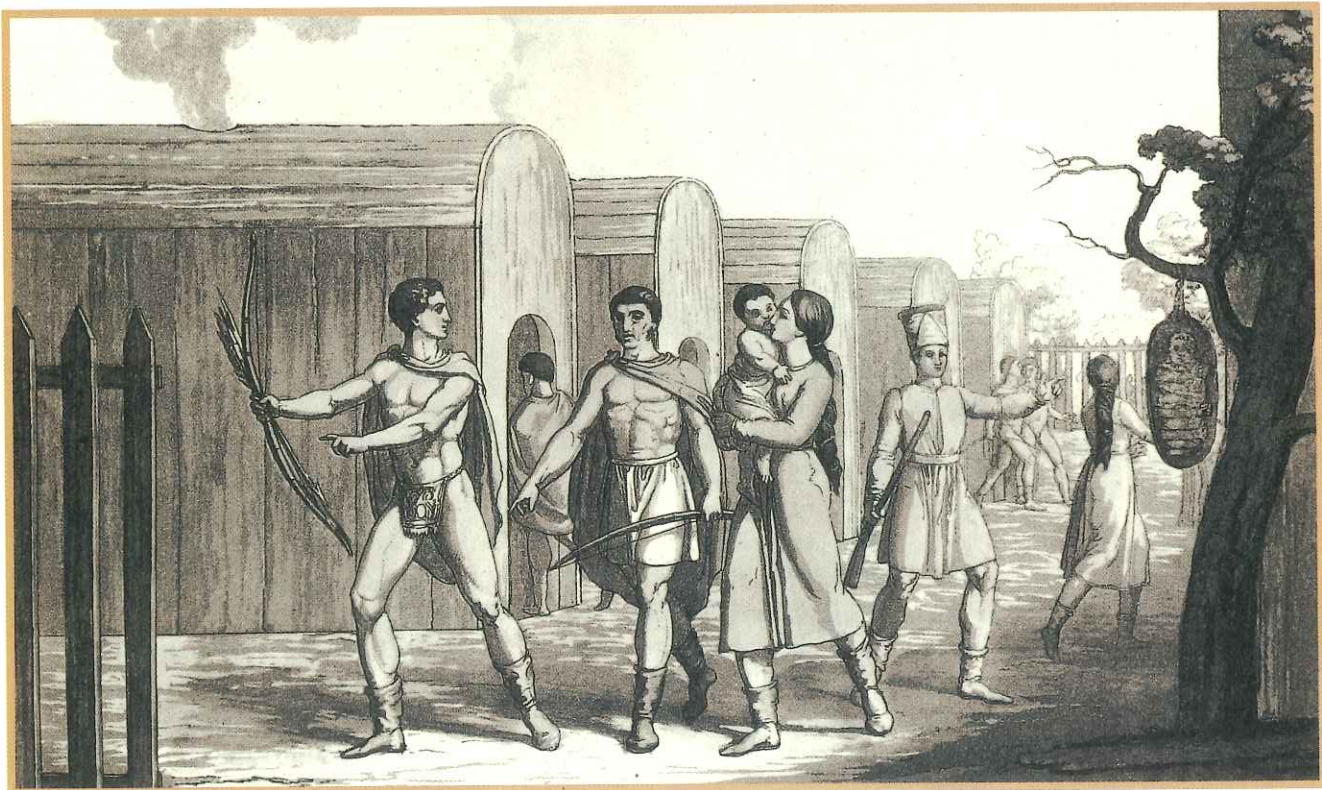
The Huron economy was based on farming, much of it directed by women. Every spring, Huron women would plant enough corn for several years, to insure against drought or to trade. Corn could also be traded to the tribes who lived north of the Canadian Shield, where farming was non-existent. In fact, the 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 and assist the local people

**genre:** literary form

**castor gras d'hiver:** prime winter beaver pelt (literally, "greasy winter beaver pelt")

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