

WHO WANTED THE LAND, AND WHY?

Imagine that you are a young person living in North America in 1713. You might be living in a small but growing French colony in the St. Lawrence Valley, a British colony in what is now the United States, or an **Indigenous** native, village along the fur trade route.

The land known as Canada today has gone through many changes over hundreds of years. Early French maps—as far back as the early 1500s—showed the land as both New France and Canada. The name Canada comes from the Iroquois word *Kanata*, which means “village” or “settlement.” Early English maps did not give this land a single name. Those maps referred to the land by the different names of the different regions existing at that time. Historical maps would have looked very different, almost unrecognizable compared to those of Canada today, because Europeans had just begun to discover the vast land.

Look at **Figure 1.1**, which is a map of part of North America, showing how it was divided before the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Some land was considered disputed territory. **Disputed territory** is land over which different groups are arguing and claiming ownership. Where does the map show disputed territories?

Indigenous native to the area; to do with the original inhabitants of Canada (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit)

disputed territory area of land that different groups claim belongs to them

Who was claiming ownership of North America at that time?

FIGURE 1.1 This map shows European territories in North America in 1713, before the Treaty of Utrecht. **Analyze:** How is this map similar and different to a map of North America?



EUROPEAN INTEREST IN NORTH AMERICA BEFORE 1713

By 1713, Europeans had been coming to North America for over 200 years. They were competing with each other to claim the land, send goods back to Europe, and build settlements. Early explorers, such as Genoese explorer Giovanni Caboto (also known as John Cabot) arrived in 1497. The King of England had sent Caboto to explore and claim lands for England. French explorer Jacques Cartier arrived in North America in 1534. He claimed land for France.

Read the quote in **Figure 1.2**. It is an excerpt from a letter by Raimondo di Soncino, ambassador in England for the Duke of Milan. He recorded his experiences in several letters while sailing on the ship with Caboto. Now look at the drawing in **Figure 1.3**. Based on these two pieces of evidence, what value did European explorers see in the lands and waters of North America?

FIGURE 1.2 This excerpt is from a December 18, 1497, letter by Raimondo di Soncino reporting on Caboto's findings. **Analyze:** Why did the ambassador devote part of his letter to describing the huge numbers of fish in the ocean off the coast of North America?

“... the sea is covered with fish ... will fetch so many fish that this kingdom will have no more need of [the fish around] Iceland.”
— Raimondo di Soncino, ambassador to the Duke of Milan



FIGURE 1.3 Nicolas de Fer drew this image in 1698. He was the official geographer for the kings of France and Spain. This image was copied and used on European maps of North America decades later. **Analyze:** What is the artist's main message in this image?

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

When arriving in North America, the Europeans saw the large amounts of resources such as fish, fur, and timber. Back in Europe, the demands of a large population left most fur-bearing animals and fish from local lakes close to extinction. The new land in North America offered jobs and wealth and a way to supply growing demands back home.

Fish, an important part of the European diet, was simple to cook and easy to preserve and transport. It took several weeks to preserve the fish with salt before it could be sent back to Europe for sale. During this time, the Europeans developed relationships with the First Nations peoples. First Nations taught Europeans how to build canoes and sleds and how to navigate the terrain. They began trading fresh food and fur to Europeans in exchange for metal pots, tools, and cloth. First Nations women provided Europeans with warm clothing such as mittens and leggings, and they helped to prepare fur for transport.

THE FUR TRADE

Fur was a necessity to survive in the winter climate, but it also became a popular European fashion in the 1500s. Over time, Europeans' desire for fur, especially beaver pelts, grew. Fur was used to make hats and other items for wealthy people. First Nations peoples did not fully understand why Europeans would choose to trade what they considered valuable everyday items in exchange for fur. But the trade was beneficial for both groups so it continued. What does **Figure 1.4** tell you about the importance of fur to Europeans?

FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES

Thousands of years before Europeans came to North America and claimed the land and resources, people were living in the land we now call Canada. First Nations lived throughout North America and had developed a variety of cultures. Each group had its own distinct language, ways of living on the land, ways of governing and organizing themselves, and beliefs and values. Peter Jones (also known as Kahkewaquonaby), a Mississauga Ojibwe chief, explains this idea in **Figure 1.5**. The quote uses the term *Indians*, which was common at that time. Today, a more preferred term is *First Nations*, or *Aboriginal peoples* when including Inuit and Métis.



FIGURE 1.4 This drawing by Wenceslaus Hollar shows an unnamed woman wearing a fur muff and cape in 1646. **Analyze:** What is the connection between a wealthy European woman dressed in fur and settlement in North America?

FIGURE 1.5 This excerpt is from an 1861 book called *History of Ojibway Indians* by Chief Jones. **Analyze:** What do Jones's words suggest about the importance of land for First Nations before Europeans arrived?

“Each tribe or body of Indians has its own range of country, and sometimes each family its own hunting grounds, marked out by certain natural divisions ... all the game within these bounds are considered their property ... It is at the peril of an intruder to trespass on the hunting grounds of another.”

— Mississauga Ojibwe Chief Peter Jones

The map in **Figure 1.6** shows the territories of the First Nations of northeastern North America from 1650 to 1760. Settlements were strategically built close to a water source to access drinking water and transportation.

The Haudenosaunee (hoh-den-oh-shoh-nee) Six Nations are made up of several groups who speak the Iroquois language. The French called them the Iroquois Confederacy. The Huron (Wyandot) Nation shared land with the Haudenosaunee. These groups sustained themselves by farming crops of corn, squash, and beans. These crops made it possible for them to live in relatively large groups of over a thousand people in the same village. However, farmland could only support agriculture for about 20 years. After this, entire villages had to relocate to look for new farmland.

Many different nations make up the Algonquian (al-gong-kee-uh-n) peoples. These nations lived in areas surrounding the Haudenosaunee. The Algonquians needed even larger territories than the Haudenosaunee because they hunted and fished for their food. Since wildlife and fish require large areas of land and water to survive, the people who depended on them also needed large areas to roam. In order to sustain their food sources, they lived in small groups of about 50 people.

How did the way people lived influence how much land they needed?

First Nations of Northeastern North America, 1650–1760



FIGURE 1.6 This map shows the different territories where various First Nations peoples settled. The dots on the map do not represent permanent settlements. Most First Nations peoples built homes that could be taken apart and rebuilt in a different location. **Analyze:** How do you think First Nations peoples' mobility affected these borders?

FORMULATE QUESTIONS

Asking questions about the past is one of the most important parts of studying history. A good inquiry question can help guide the exploration of a historical topic.

Good inquiry questions

- are important and meaningful to us
- are open-ended—they do not have just one answer
- are debatable—people may not agree on the answer
- can be answered by gathering evidence and facts

Brainstorming can help formulate a good question to lead an inquiry. Think about what you already know about your subject. Now decide what you might need to know and what you want to find out. A table like the one in **Figure 1.7** can help get your brainstorming activity started.

Who/Which?	Who owned the land in North America in the 1700s?
What?	What difficulties could Europeans encounter in North America?
Where?	Where might Europeans live in North America while gathering resources?
When?	When did First Nations begin trading with Europeans?
Why?	Why would Europeans find North American resources so valuable?
How?	How could the weather and land affect travel?
Other	Did First Nations peoples fight among themselves?

FIGURE 1.7 This table can help you brainstorm a variety of questions to focus your inquiry. **Analyze:** Which of these questions spark further questions for you?

CASE STUDY: FIRST NATIONS TRADING RELATIONSHIPS

First Nations peoples built shelters, gathered food, and made clothing from the resources available in their surroundings. Plants, trees, and animals could be used in many different ways including as medicine or for spiritual ceremonies. For certain items, such as rare stones (**Figure 1.8**), horses, buffalo hides, and bitter root, they traded with other First Nations. Some of the objects were essential for everyday life. Others were used for decoration, like making jewellery.

Trade between First Nations peoples was a respected activity that brought peace between nations. A ceremony would be held where trading nations would smoke a pipe to accept the responsibilities of the trade and to show goodwill. Gifts were also exchanged as a sign of friendship. Nations that did not speak the same language used a form of sign language to communicate.

Trading benefited First Nations peoples in many areas. Trade brought people the goods they needed and helped different nations engage with one another.



FIGURE 1.8 Volcanic glass called *obsidian* was traded between First Nations peoples. Obsidian could be broken easily to produce sharp edges. **Analyze:** What items do you think could be made with obsidian?



FIGURE 1.9 This early 1900s painting by Archibald Bruce Stapleton is entitled *Radisson & Grosseillers Established the Fur Trade in the Great North West, 1662*. Radisson and Des Grosseillers are shown in the centre negotiating with First Nations people. **Analyze:** How do you think the goods being traded with Europeans changed life for First Nations peoples?

When Europeans arrived in North America, trade quickly developed with First Nations peoples. Examine **Figure 1.9**. The painting shows explorers Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart Des Grosseillers trading with First Nations people. How do you think Europeans trading with First Nations peoples would be different than First Nations trading among themselves? Radisson and Des Grosseillers were the first Europeans to extensively explore the interior of Canada. They eventually set up a trading post on Lake Superior, negotiating with the Cree to trade furs. Europeans depended on trade with First Nations peoples to help them survive in North America.

TRY IT

1. Work with a partner to develop an inquiry question on the topic of First Nations trading relationships. Write a question for each row in **Figure 1.7**.
2. Choose a topic relevant to life in North America in the 1700s. Write three possible inquiry questions using the criteria of a good inquiry question. Share your questions with one or two classmates. Ask them to offer suggestions for improvement. Revise your questions if necessary.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS

In the early 1600s, France and England tried to make their claims on North America stronger. They did this by establishing permanent settlements. These settlements were built on land where First Nations peoples lived. Why did the French and English believe that they had the right to build on First Nations' land?

Read the quote in **Figure 1.10**. It is from a sermon about First Nations peoples, written by a preacher in 1609. A sermon is a speech on a religious or moral subject. Sometimes sermons were printed and published so that a wider audience could read them. The word *savage* is a racist term that both the English and the French used for Aboriginal peoples. Read the quote in **Figure 1.11** from historian Dr. Emma LaRocque, a Plains-Cree Métis. Why do you think Europeans used the word *savage* so freely?

“... it is likely to be true that these savages have no particular property in any part or parcel of that country, but only a general residency there, as wild beasts in the forest.”
— Preacher

FIGURE 1.10 This quote comes from a preacher's sermon in 1609. The sermon was published at the time when Europeans began to make settlements in North America. **Analyze:** What does the language in this quote suggest about European attitudes toward First Nations peoples at that time?

The first English settlement was in Newfoundland. The English focused their settlements along the east coast of North America, south of the French, who lived mostly along the St. Lawrence River. As well, the English built three trading posts around James Bay. These trading posts put the English closer to some First Nations, making it easier to trade with them for furs.

The French relied on First Nations traders to bring them furs along the St. Lawrence River, which had the largest French settlements. First Nations came from the north to Montréal and other French trading posts to exchange furs for European goods. The river was the best way to move goods in New France.

In the early 1600s, France put in place the **seigneurial system** for its North American settlements. The seigneurial system was the way that land was divided among settlers in New France. A landlord, called a *seigneur*, rented out farmland to farmers for a small fee. Most of the farms in New France were located along the St. Lawrence River. **Figure 1.12A** shows the shape of the farms in New France in the 1600s and 1700s. **Figure 1.12B** shows farmland in the province of Québec today, from above. What similarities do you see?

“Europeans [called] themselves ... ‘civilized’ and Indigenous peoples ... ‘savages,’ the underlying assumption being that as savages, ‘Indians’ were at the bottom of human development.”
— Dr. Emma LaRocque, historian and First Nations expert

FIGURE 1.11 Dr. LaRocque explains the use of the word *savage* in historical documents. **Analyze:** What reasons could there be for the Europeans to think of themselves as civilized?

seigneurial system the system used by the government to divide land among settlers in New France

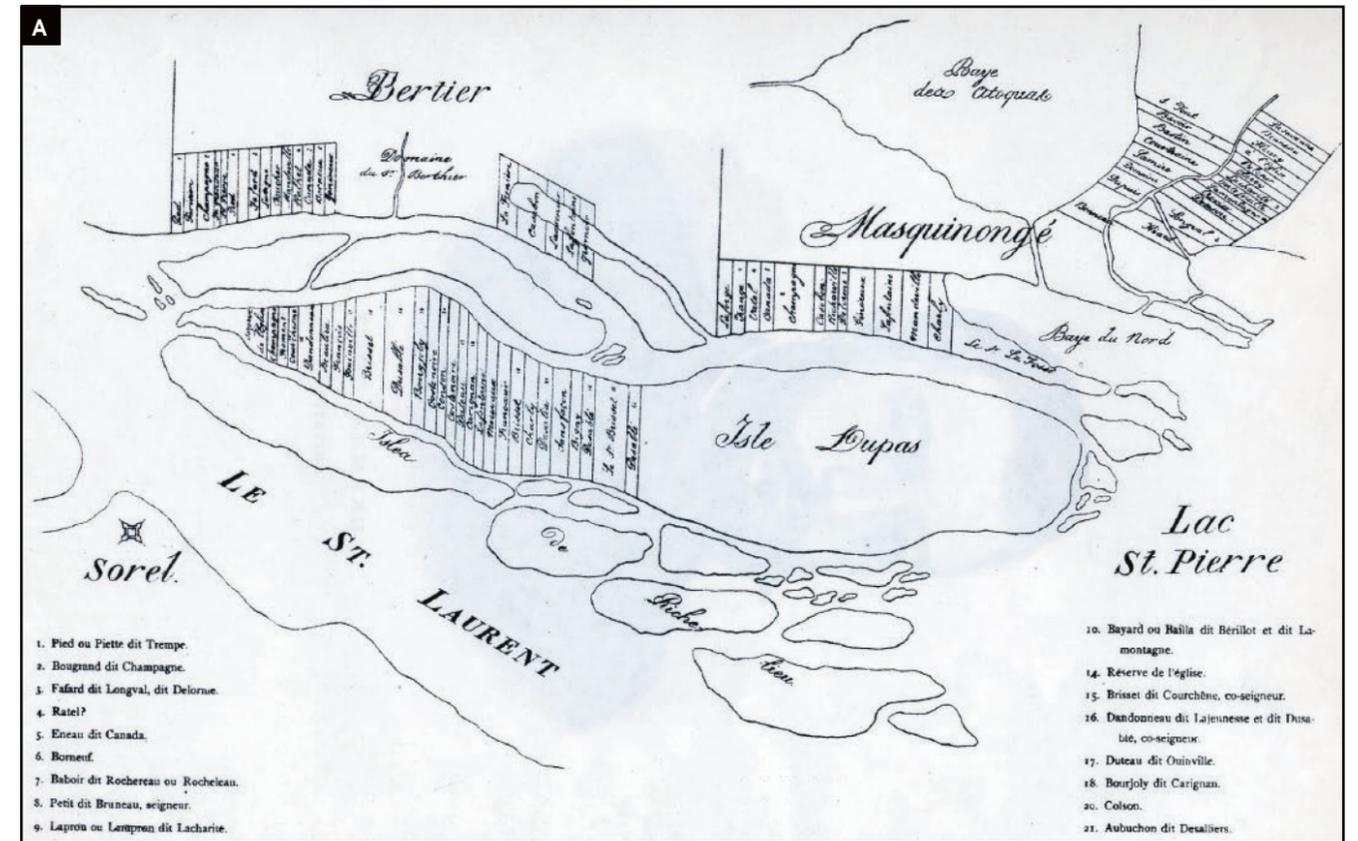


FIGURE 1.12 (A) This 1709 diagram by Gédéon Catalogne shows farms along the St. Lawrence River in New France. (B) This photo shows farms today along the St. Lawrence River in the province of Québec. **Analyze:** Why would people design settlements this way?



CHECK-IN

- GATHER AND ORGANIZE** What was the significance for both Europeans and First Nations of the arrival of Europeans in North America and their use of resources? Create a t-chart to explain what European arrival in North America and Europeans' use of resources reveals about Europeans' and First Nations' values.
- CONTINUITY AND CHANGE** How did land use change with the arrival of Europeans in North America? How did land use stay the same?
- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** Why did Europeans want to own different parts of North America? How did Europeans try to claim ownership of the land? Would this method work today?