

## **1 – Relationship between Indigenous People and the French: Donnacona and Cartier**

SGT: Overall the French behaved differently towards the First Nations than the English did, emphasizing the Fur Trade rather than right away settling on their land and pushing them off it. However, there were many parallels in how things played out, and still many of the same devastating results from Contact, such as disease:

Jaenen, Cornelius, Pulla Siomonn, Millette, Dominique, Parrott, Zach *Indigenous-French Relations*  
[www.canadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca), Oct 3 2007, updated August 17 2015



Huron Chief Nicholas Isawanhanhi, Huron chief, shown wearing the regimental coat commonly awarded to Indigenous trading captains during the fur trade.

(courtesy Library and Archives Canada/C-38948)

### **Terra Nullius**

In the 16th century, the French, like the English and Spanish, laid claim to lands "not possessed by any other Christian prince" based on the European legal theory of *Terra Nullius*. This theory argued that uninhabited, or at least uncultivated lands, needed to be brought under Christian dominion.

### **16<sup>th</sup> c French First Contact Cartier & Donnacona**

CBC People's History: First Contact episode 1. Watch: 1:04-1:22min.

<https://youtu.be/Ylgo4uBbouQ?si=6OQ-SMOo1B9CUKrC> (also look at transcript)



### 17th Century: Samuel de Champlain

Samuel de Champlain, cartographer, explorer, colonial administrator, author (born *circa* 1567 in Brouage, France; died 25 December 1635 in Quebec City). Known as the “Father of New France,” Samuel de Champlain played a major role in establishing [New France](#) from 1603 to 1635. He is also credited with founding [Quebec City](#) in 1608. He explored the Atlantic coastline (in [Acadia](#)), the Canadian interior and the [Great Lakes](#) region. He also helped found French colonies in Acadia and at [Trois-Rivières](#), and he established friendly relations and alliances with many [First Nations](#), including the [Montagnais](#), the [Huron](#), the [Odawa](#) and the Nipissing. For many years, he was the chief person responsible for administrating the colony of New France. Champlain published four books as well as several maps of North America. His works are the only written account of New France at the beginning of the 17th century.



Samuel de Champlain (false portrait)

False portrait of Samuel de Champlain, based on an engraved portrait of Michel Particelli d'Emery by Balthazar Moncornet and dated 1654. Nevertheless, this image has become the one most associated with Champlain as no other detailed image of the man exists.

(Courtesy Library and Archives Canada/C-6643)

First Voyages to Canada

Champlain landed in Canada in 1603, on a voyage up the [St. Lawrence River](#) with François Gravé du Pont. In 1604, Champlain sailed to [Acadia](#) with [Pierre Dugua de Mons](#), who planned to establish a French colony there. Champlain was a [cartographer](#), he was tasked with searching the coast for an ideal location for settlement. He also acted as a diplomat in dealings with the [Indigenous peoples](#) that Dugua wanted to get to know better.

In 1605 and again in 1606, Champlain explored the coastline of what is now New England. He went as far south as Cape Cod. In 1608, Dugua chose the St. Lawrence over Acadia. He sent Champlain to establish a settlement at Quebec (now [Quebec City](#)), where the [fur trade](#) with [First Nations](#) could be controlled more easily.



Port-Royal (photo by Bill Brooks/Masterfile)

Port-Royal, Nova Scotia, established by Champlain in 1605, was the centre of Acadian life. This reconstruction is a national historic park.

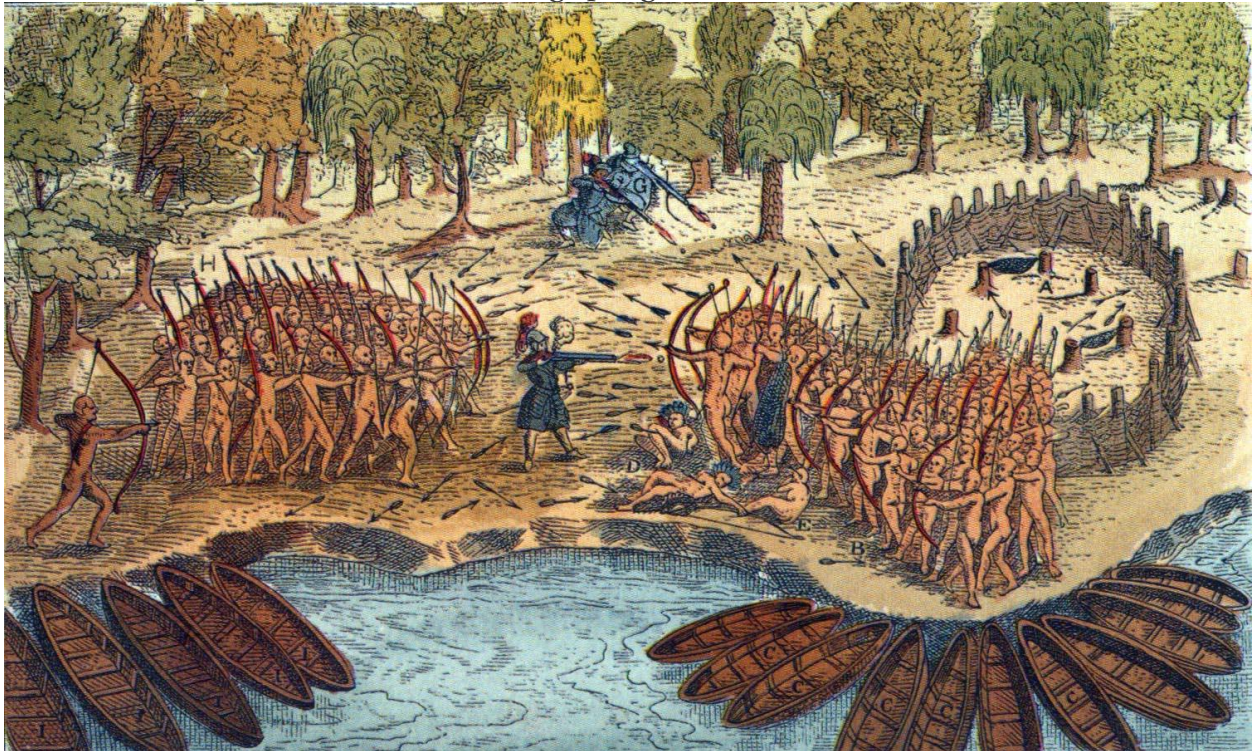


## Settlement at Quebec

On 13 April 1608, Champlain set sail from France and reached [Tadoussac](#) on 3 June. He then resumed his course up the [St. Lawrence](#), arriving off Cap Diamant on 3 July. Champlain later wrote, "I searched for a place suitable for our settlement, but I could find none more convenient or better situated than the point of Quebec."

Champlain set the men to work felling trees and sawing the logs into boards. They dug ditches and constructed a storehouse and cellar. The settlement included another three main buildings; these two-storey structures were the men's living quarters. A gallery ran around the outside of the buildings on the second floor. The settlement was protected by ditches, stockades and cannons.... [They also planted crops]. Despite their preparations, the men suffered that winter from severe illness. Sixteen of 25 men died, including the surgeon.

Champlain and the few survivors received fresh supplies in April 1609. In June, he set off on an expedition, accompanied by two Frenchmen and a party of Wendat (Huron), Algonquin and Montagnais. The group reached a great lake, which would be named in his honour (see [Lake Champlain](#).) In late July, they encountered a party of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) at [Ticonderoga](#). According to historian Marcel Trudel, Champlain killed two men during the engagement. Not long after, he sailed to France, leaving Pierre Chavin in command of Quebec. Champlain returned the following spring.



## Samuel de Champlain

Engraving based on a drawing by Champlain of his 1609 voyage. It depicts a battle between Haudenosaunee and Algonquian tribes near Lake Champlain.

(Published in Champlain, S. de, "Les voyages du sieur de Champlain..." A Paris: chez Jean Berjon..., 1613)

Champlain vowed to make Quebec the centre of a powerful colony. However, he was opposed by the various merchant companies that employed him. It was more profitable for them to be

involved only in the [fur trade](#). In a 1618 report, Champlain outlined Quebec's commercial, industrial and [agricultural opportunities](#). His dream seemed about to come true in 1627 when the [Compagnie des Cent-Associés](#) was founded. [Then English captured Tadoussac and took Champlain as a prisoner to England. After several years the colony was returned to the French].

Appointed lieutenant by Cardinal Richelieu, Champlain returned to Quebec in 1633. He was able to see the promising beginnings of the colony he had planned. He was paralyzed in the fall of 1635 due to a stroke. He died on [Christmas Day](#) that year. His remains, buried under the Champlain chapel which adjoined Notre-Dame-de-la-Recouvrance, may today lie under the cathedral basilica, [Notre-Dame de Québec](#).

### **Relationship with Indigenous People**

Champlain developed a vast trade network by forming and consolidating alliances with the [Montagnais](#) of the [St. Lawrence](#), the nations on the [Ottawa River](#), and the [Huron](#) of the [Great Lakes](#).

<https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/pages/our-stories/exhibits/samuel-de-champlain/history/champlain-and-tadoussac-1603>

Watch a segment from [Canada: The Story of Us Episode 1: Worlds Collide \(pre-1608 – 1759\)](#): 13:00 – 20:26 minutes

<https://youtu.be/MWdOQE459vg?si=ItquZ98uGuZ0JqcK>

Champlain tips the balance in the war between the Wendat and the Haudenosaunee (Summer 1609) CBC · Posted: Mar 14, 2017 3:08 PM MDT | Last Updated: March 26, 2017

<https://www.cbc.ca/2017/canadathestoryofus/csou-episodes/episode-1-worlds-collide-pre-1608-1759-1.4024003>

Two of Eastern North America's most powerful Indigenous confederacies, the Wendat and the Haudenosaunee, are locked in a brutal war for control of the fur trading routes. Chief Oschasteguin, leader of the Wendat Confederacy's Arendaenronnon nation, decides to enter into an alliance with Champlain and the French settlers. The French will get the exclusive rights to sell the Wendat's furs in Europe. In return, the French will supply the Wendat with manpower and weapons in their fight against the Haudenosaunee. One of those weapons is the arquebus, the forerunner to the modern rifle. Champlain uses the arquebus to kill three Haudenosaunee chiefs at a battle in what is now upstate New York, killing two of them with one shot and causing the rest of the Haudenosaunee to retreat. This alliance between settlers of New France and the Wendat will be profitable for both parties — and deadly to their enemies — for years to come.

Jaenen, Cornelius, Pulla Siomonn, Millette, Dominique, Parrott, Zach *Indigenous-French Relations*

[www.canadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca), Oct 3 2007, updated August 17 2015

### French Settlement and Land Claims

By the early 17th century, as the [fur trade](#) expanded, a new policy of pacification emerged. ...Beyond the Acadian farmlands and the Laurentian [seigneurial](#) tract, Indigenous peoples continued to be fully independent, following their traditional lifestyle and customs on their ancestral lands.

Although France claimed sovereignty over a wide area of the St. Lawrence basin and its hinterland the French Crown also recognized that Indigenous peoples were part of independent nations governed by their own laws and customs. They were referred to as allies, not subjects.

...Indigenous political leaders accepted this “protectorate” because it offered external support while permitting them to govern themselves and maintain traditional ways of life. ...

BUT

...The French sought to attract the Indigenous people close to their settlements with the view to having them adopt French agricultural sedentary life. The English, in New England for example, drove Indigenous people off their traditional lands into the hinterland in order to establish agricultural holdings and permanent settlement.

...Official French objectives had been to Christianize and francize Indigenous peoples in order to attain their utopian ideal of “one people.” The church tried to achieve this objective through itinerant missions, education of an Indigenous élite in France, reserves and boarding schools, but in the end it was clear that Indigenous culture would survive despite these efforts. Indeed, cross-cultural influence was reciprocal; missionaries and fur traders learned [Indigenous languages](#) and adopted survival techniques.



Painting by Frances Ann Hopkins.

The overturned canoes make temporary shelters for the men (courtesy Library and Archives Canada/C-2773).

### Legacy

The relationship between French settlers and the Indigenous people in what became Canada was built on the foundation of commerce, with intermarriage and evangelization seen as methods toward cultural assimilation. Once usurped by the British, French colonial administrators had little contact with Indigenous peoples. However, French-speaking settlers



maintained links with Indigenous communities, and continued to intermarry and form economic partnerships.

Ancestralfindings.com

**The French were interacting with North American Natives for a century before the English. Here's how they established friendly relations and learned each others' languages.**

Why did some **Native Americans** already know European languages when the English began colonizing northeastern North America in the early 1600's? The reason is that they'd been interacting with the French for nearly a century before the first permanent English settlement was established on North American shores. It was only a few years after Columbus made his famous voyage that the French began to explore the eastern coast of North America. Henry VIII's father was still on the throne of England when the French were making these early trips across the Atlantic. They came to explore but quickly discovered that North America was rich with a resource that was very valuable in Europe, as well as among the Natives... fur.

Exploration was quickly abandoned for commercial enterprise, and the French North American fur trade was born. It is one of the earliest commercial enterprises of any European country on the North American continent. The French spent much of their time hunting and trapping animals for fur in what is now eastern Canada, and it quickly became a large business. The French came seasonally, during the warm months when the animals were out and about and active, then went home for the cold seasons, their precious cargo in tow. The furs they brought back to Europe with them were used all across the continent to manufacture textiles.

During their forays onto North American shores, the French encountered the Natives and developed a good relationship with them. This was much different from later English and Spanish interactions with them, as people from these nations established permanent settlements and tried to force their religions and customs on the Natives, which was met with resentment.

The French treated the Natives as equal trading partners and didn't try to convert them or change them in any way. Instead, they traded tools and weapons with them in exchange for furs the Natives themselves had trapped, since Natives used furs in their own clothing. The Huron and Ottawa tribes were the first tribes with whom the French traded, but the trade eventually moved to other tribes who wanted in on the action. The things they were trading fur for with the French were equal to great wealth in their societies.

As the French and the Natives interacted, they developed friendly relations with one another. They also began to learn each others' languages. Some French fur traders even married Native women and began staying in Native villages year round. The French were definitely the European nation with the most marriages into Native tribes, and these friendly relations were the very reason for it.

By the time the English began colonizing Virginia and New England, the French already had a century of positive interactions with the Natives of the area behind them. Because many

Natives in the area were able to speak French, they could communicate with the early English explorers, who also knew the language. This knowledge provided an opening for them to also learn English. Enough Natives who were bilingual in French learned English from the earliest English explorers that by the time the **Mayflower** landed in Plymouth in 1620, there were a handful of local Natives who could communicate with them in their own language and thus help the **Pilgrims** through their first hard winter in the New World

#### **Ancestralfindings.com: The French and Native American Relations**

“...This close alliance...led the Natives to side with the French in their conflicts with the English settlers that came later in the 1600s and into the mid-1700s. Relations between the Natives and the English were not nearly as good.

The English treated the Natives as inferior, believed they stood in the way of their God-given right to the land in America and tried to subject the Natives to their laws as they established their colonies. The Spanish didn't have any better relations with the Natives, as they tried to enslave them when they first came to America, and later established missions where they tried to force them to convert from their traditional religions to Catholicism. The Natives did not appreciate any of this.”

#### **Supplementary Notes on how England got going as a Colonial Power; The Irish**

England's first “colony” was Ireland, which they invaded in the 12th century, but they mostly left it alone until Henry VIII, who declared himself King of Ireland, encouraged English settlers to go there in the 1500s. Protestants then settled in Ireland as an overlord class, pushing the Irish off their land. Most Irish people remained Catholic, which developed into the Irish Catholics being seen as inferior by the Protestant settlers. Overall, the English oppressed the Irish “natives” and brought similar attitudes with them when they settled in North America. (SGT)

[Aziz Rahman](#), [Mary Anne Clarke](#), [Sean Byrne](#) “The Art of Breaking People Down The Art of Breaking People Down: The British Colonial Model in Ireland and Canada”, [Peace Research](#), Vol. 49, No. 2 (2017), pp. 15-38

Ireland was central to Britain's first colonial expansion and its techniques were honed in its expanded colonization around the world, including in Canada. The common features include control over land and resources and subjugation of Indigenous peoples through enforced assimilation. Britain wanted Ireland and Canada for military strategic purposes, economic profit, and political power. Britain forced its way onto both lands through methods that included forced relocations of Indigenous peoples and legislating assimilation through penal laws in Ireland and the Indian Act in Canada. Britain's "divide and rule policy," cultural and spiritual subjugation, and the use of planted settlers were employed in both Ireland and Canada.

COMPARISONS: IRISH AND CANADIAN COLONIZATION PROCESSES (p.27-28)



The British colonial model includes...: a divide and rule strategy through creation of apartheid laws that suppress and treat local people as inferior... The peoples of Indigenous lands are either used as a means to access the lands potential - tenant farmers in Ireland and guides and brokers in the fur trade in Canada - or removed to clear access to more lands, as seen in (for example) forced emigration from Ireland... and forced containment onto small reserves in Canada.

**Sanitized Version of history: Story of Donnacona and Cartier used to name a ship commissioned in 1943:**

[www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca))

HMCS Donnacona The official lineage of HMCS Donnacona extant commissioned ship.



Badge Description: Argent three maple leaves conjoined on the one stem Gules and in base over the stem a Native Canadian's dexter hand and a white man's dexter hand clasped together proper.

Significance When Jacques Cartier returned to France from his first voyage to America, he took back with him two Native braves. They returned to America with Cartier on his second voyage and acted as guides. They told Cartier about the settlements of Stadacona and Hochelaga on the St. Lawrence River and referred to them by the Huron-Iroquois word Kenneta, which means "a habitation." Cartier thought that they were telling him the name of the country, which he had not yet explored.

At the point where the St. Charles River flows into the St. Lawrence, Cartier found many Natives living with their Chief, Donnacona. This was the settlement of Stadacona. In discussion Donnacona spoke freely about the Kenneta (which Cartier wrote as Canada) thus corroborating the information given him by his two Native guides. This was how Canada got her name, as Cartier referred to the then-known area as Canada and marked it as such on his charts. Therefore as a tribute to Chief Donnacona it is quite proper to associate his name with the name of Canada. The ship's badge for Donnacona shows the men's hands in the clasped position and out of them arises the device of Canada, three red maple leaves conjoined on one stem and on a field argent or white.

Motto HAND ON HAND, Colours Black and Vermilion, Battle Honours None Lineage First of Name: Shore establishment. Naval Reserve Division, Montreal, Quebec. Commissioned 26 October 1943.

