



A statue of Samuel de Champlain

WITNESS HISTORY  AUDIO**A Piece of the Past**

In 1867, a Canadian farmer of English descent was cutting logs on his property with his fourteen-year-old son. As they used their oxen to pull away a large log, a piece of turf came up to reveal a round, yellow object. The elaborately engraved object they found, dated 1603, was an astrolabe that had belonged to French explorer Samuel de Champlain. This astrolabe was a piece of the story of the European exploration of Canada and the French-British rivalry that followed.

**Focus Question** How did European struggles for power shape the North American continent?

## Struggle for North America

**Objectives**

- Explain why the colony of New France grew slowly.
- Analyze the establishment and growth of the English colonies.
- Understand why Europeans competed for power in North America and how their struggle affected Native Americans.

**Terms, People, and Places**

New France

revenue

Pilgrims

compact

French and Indian War

Treaty of Paris

**Note Taking**

**Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence** Create a timeline like the one below to record the sequence of important events in the struggle for North America.

Cartier explores eastern Canada.

1534      1607



In the 1600s, France, the Netherlands, England, and Sweden joined Spain in settling North America. North America did not yield vast treasure or offer a water passage to Asia, as they had hoped. Before long, though, the English and French were turning large profits. By 1700, France and England controlled large parts of North America. Their colonies differed from each other and from those of Spanish America in terms of language, government, resources, and society.

**Building New France**

By the early 1500s, French fishing ships were crossing the Atlantic each year to harvest rich catches of cod off Newfoundland, Canada. Within 200 years, the French had occupied or claimed nearly half of North America.

**Explorers and Missionaries** French claims in Canada—which the French called **New France**—quietly grew while French rulers were distracted by wars at home in Europe. In 1534, Jacques Cartier (zhahk kahr tee AY) began exploring the coastline of eastern Canada, eventually discovering the St. Lawrence River. Traveling inland on the river, he claimed much of present-day eastern Canada for France. Jesuits and other missionaries soon followed the explorers. They advanced into the wilderness, trying with little success to convert the Native Americans they met to Christianity.



**Furs, Trapping, and Fishing** French explorers and fur traders gradually traveled inland with the help of Native American allies, who sought support against rival Native American groups. Eventually, France's American empire reached from Quebec to the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River to Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico.

The population of New France, however, grew slowly. The first permanent French settlement was not established until 1608, when Samuel de Champlain established a colony in Quebec. Wealthy landlords bought huge tracts, or areas of land, along the St. Lawrence River. They sought settlers to farm the land, but the harsh Canadian climate, with its long winters, attracted few French peasants.

Many who went to New France soon abandoned farming in favor of the more profitable fur trapping and trading. They faced a hard life in the wilderness, but the soaring European demand for fur ensured good prices. Fishing was another industry that supported settlers, who exported cod and other fish to Europe.

## BIOGRAPHY



### Jacques Cartier

In 1534, Jacques Cartier (1491–1557) sailed to North America on behalf of France. His commission was to find spices, gold, and a passage to Asia. Cartier found none of these things, despite several attempts, and ended his career in relative obscurity.

During his own lifetime, no one guessed the impact that Cartier's voyages would have.

In his thousand-mile trek into Canada's interior, he staked France's later claim to a huge amount of North American territory. His legacy also lives on in the Canadian place names he coined such as the St. Lawrence River and the name Canada—derived from an Iroquois word meaning "village" or "settlement." **Why were Cartier's discoveries undervalued at the time?**

**An Empire Slowly Expands** In the late 1600s, the French king Louis XIV set out to strengthen royal power and boost **revenues**, or income, from taxes from his overseas empire. He appointed officials to oversee economic activities in New France. He also sent soldiers and more settlers—including women—to North America. Louis, however, who was Catholic, prohibited Protestants from settling in New France. By the early 1700s, French forts, missions, and trading posts stretched from Quebec to Louisiana, and the population was growing. Yet the population of New France remained small compared to that of the English colonies that were expanding along the Atlantic coast.

**✓ Checkpoint** Why did French settlers abandon farming in favor of fur trapping and trading?

## The English Colonies

In 1497, a Venetian navigator known by the English name John Cabot found rich fishing grounds off Newfoundland, which he claimed for England. Later English navigators continued to search for a northwest passage to Asia, with no success. In the 1600s, England concentrated on establishing colonies along the Atlantic seaboard—the coast of the present-day eastern United States.

**Establishing the First Colonies** The English built their first permanent colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Although the colony was meant to bring wealth and profit, in the early years of the colony many settlers died of starvation and disease. The rest survived with the help of friendly Native Americans. The colony finally made headway when the settlers started to grow and export tobacco, a plant that had been cultivated by Native Americans for thousands of years.



In 1620, another group of English settlers landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts. They were **Pilgrims**, or English Protestants who rejected the Church of England. They sought religious freedom rather than commercial profit. Before coming ashore, they signed the Mayflower Compact, in which they set out guidelines for governing their North American colony. A **compact** is an agreement among people. Today, we see this document as an important early step toward self-government.

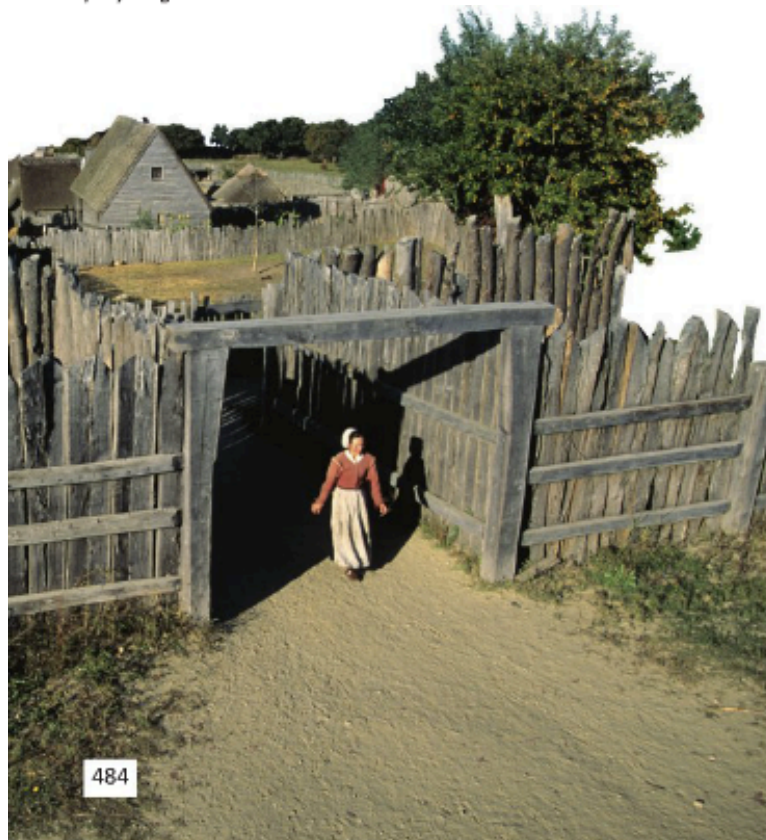
Many Pilgrims died in the early years of the Plymouth colony. Local Native Americans, however, taught them to grow corn and helped them survive in the new land. Soon, a new wave of English Protestant immigrants arrived to establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**The English Colonies Grow** In the 1600s and 1700s, the English established additional colonies. Some, like Virginia and New York, were commercial ventures, organized for profit. Others, like Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, were set up as havens for persecuted religious groups. Still others, like Georgia and South Carolina, were gifts from English kings to loyal supporters.

Settlers in all of the colonies spent the early years just struggling to survive. They quickly abandoned dreams of finding riches like the Spanish gold and silver. However, over time they learned to create wealth by using the resources native to their surroundings. In New England, prosperous fishing, timber, and shipbuilding industries grew. In the middle colonies, farmers grew huge quantities of grain on the abundant land. In the South, colonists found that cash crops such as rice and tobacco grew well in the warm climate. They therefore developed a plantation economy to grow these crops. As in New Spain, the colonists imported African slaves to clear land and work the plantations. In several colonies, especially in the South, enslaved Africans and their descendants would eventually outnumber people of European descent.


#### A Fanciful View

An English play promised that “. . . gold is more plentiful there [Virginia] than copper is with us. . . . and as for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holy days and gather them by the seashore.” *Does this photo of the recreation of the Jamestown colony support the playwright’s views?*



**Governing the Colonies** Like the rulers of Spain and France, English monarchs asserted control over their American colonies. They appointed royal governors to oversee colonial affairs and had Parliament pass laws to regulate colonial trade. Yet, compared with settlers in the Spanish and French colonies, English colonists enjoyed a large degree of self-government. Each colony had its own representative assembly, elected by propertied men, that advised the governor and made decisions on local issues.

The tradition of consulting representative assemblies grew out of the English experience. Beginning in the 1200s, Parliament had begun to play an important role in English affairs. Slowly, too, English citizens had gained certain legal and political rights. England’s American colonists expected to enjoy the same rights. When colonists later protested British policies in North America, they viewed themselves as “freeborn Englishmen” who were defending their traditional rights.

 **Checkpoint** For what reasons were the English colonies established?

European Land Claims in the Americas, About 1700



▲ A Chippewa beadwork bag reflects the influence of the French nuns who taught the Native Americans how to embroider.

▼ Europeans used American gold and silver to make dishes like this Portuguese platter dating from the 1500s.



▼ A coat of arms from the time the Dutch briefly controlled the colony of New Netherland (New York) shows the importance of the beaver to the colony's trade.



- England
- France
- Spain
- Portugal
- Netherlands
- Native culture

**New Encounters**

As Europeans explored the Americas, claiming lands for their monarchs, they encountered diverse groups of Native Americans who already lived there. Europeans and Native Americans both relied on the resources of the land they inhabited. Though the groups often clashed, they influenced each other in many ways.



▲ English settlers made chests like this one out of native American oak, using traditional English patterns.

**Map Skills** Within a hundred years or so, European exploration of the Americas had led to huge land claims by various countries.

- Locate** (a) Brazil (b) English colonies (c) Peru (d) New Spain
- Describe** What geographical factor do all of the European land claims share? Why is this so?
- Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the boundaries of the European land claims end as illustrated on the map?



## Struggling for Power

By the 1600s, Spain, France, England, and the Netherlands all had colonies in North America. They began to fight—both in the colonies and around the world—to protect and expand their interests.

### Vocabulary Builder

**prevail**—(pree VAYL) *v.* to succeed; to triumph

### Living Languages

A sign in British Columbia—written in both English and the local Indian language—shows how Native American influence lingers long after the Americas became British.



**Competing for Colonies** By the late 1600s, French claims included present-day Canada as well as much of the present-day central United States. The Spanish had moved north, making claims to present-day Texas and Florida. Meanwhile, the English and Dutch maintained colonies along the East Coast. Native Americans throughout the colonies entered the conflict, hoping to play the Europeans against one another. Competition was also fierce in the Caribbean, as European nations fought to acquire the profitable sugar-producing colonies. By the 1700s, the French and English Caribbean islands, worked by enslaved Africans, had surpassed the whole of North America in exports to Europe.

**Bitter Rivalry Turns to War** During the 1700s, Britain and France emerged as powerful rivals. They clashed in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia. In North America, war between the two powers erupted in 1754. Called the **French and Indian War**, it raged until 1763. It also turned into a worldwide struggle known as the Seven Years' War, which spread to Europe in 1756 and then to India and Africa.

During the war, British soldiers and colonial troops launched a series of campaigns against the French in Canada and on the Ohio frontier. At first, France won several victories. Then, in 1759, British troops launched an attack on Quebec, the capital of New France. The British scaled steep cliffs along the river and captured the city. Although the war dragged on until 1763, the British had **prevailed** in Canada.

The 1763 **Treaty of Paris** officially ended the worldwide war and ensured British dominance in North America. France was forced to cede Canada and its lands east of the Mississippi River to Britain. It handed the Louisiana Territory over to Spain. However, France regained the rich sugar-producing islands in the Caribbean and the slave-trading outposts in Africa that the British had seized during the war.

**Checkpoint** Why was the French and Indian War fought?

SECTION

## 3 Assessment



### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-1531

#### Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

#### Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence** Use your completed timeline to answer the Focus Question: How did European struggles for power shape the North American continent?

#### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Make Comparisons** Why did New France grow slowly compared with Spanish and English colonies?
4. **Identify Central Issues** Why did the English colonies have a large degree of self-government?
5. **Make Generalizations** How did Britain come to dominate North America?
6. **Draw Inferences** Why did Native American groups side with European powers rather than join together to oppose them?

#### Writing About History

**Quick Write: Write a Thesis Statement** Once you have chosen the things you will compare and contrast in your essay, you must write a thesis statement. Your thesis statement should address clearly how the things you are comparing relate similarly or differently to your topic. For example, your thesis statement might focus on how the French and the English took different paths in establishing colonies in the Americas.