

# The history of the province of Québec, from land to property Part I (1534-1700)

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## Preliminary remark of Tocqueville

- “The four hundred thousand French of Lower Canada today form the debris of an old people lost in the midst of the flood of a new nation. Around them the foreign population grows larger constantly; it extends on all sides; it penetrates into the ranks of the former masters of the land, dominates their towns, and denatures their language” (Tocqueville, 2000: 387).

# The explorations of Jacques Cartier

- Jacques Cartier, a marin from Saint-Malo
- Different travels to Canada, the first official one is from 1534
- The idea of reaching the new world, China
- Difficult travel (the Saint-Laurent river had many storms)
- In his notebooks, Cartier thad relations with Indigenous people, he tried to understand them but there were some cultural clashes

# The city of Québec

- Many populations which were present on the territory (77 nations, 53 different languages, 12 linguistic families)
- Samuel Champlain will be the next European who will establish the fur trade and build the city of Québec in 1608
- Samuel de Champlain is a geographer who is interested in trade for the survival of Québec. Need to have more *coureurs de bois* to have incomes

# Champlain and the alliances with some of the First Nations

- Champlain had trade agreements with some of the First Nations (Algonquins, wendat, hurons...) but had to fight against the enemies of the Algonquins (the Iroquois which built a powerful confederation)
- Québec was occupied by the British 1629-1632, France and England had the same views on the continent (fishing....)
- Compagnie de la Nouvelle France created by the cardinal of Richelieu
- At the death of Champlain in 1635, there were hundreds of people living in the colony

# The wars with the Iroquois

- Cultivation of the maize
- The French-Iroquois wars (the Iroquois had another style of war not based on the cannons, they knew the territory and could hide themselves)
- The Iroquois wars (1608-1701). Champlain was never a governor of the colony but these wars threatened the colony (the settlers were about to leave the colony in 1650). The Iroquois were allied with the British settlers in North America.

## The administration of *Nouvelle France*

- Jean Talon (1626-1694) in the 17th century was the intendent of the Nouvelle France and decided to make a census of the population to evaluate the state of the colony.
- The era of administration. Talon noticed that the colony was not populated, he made many families and women come from France to reinforce the colony.

# The demographic issue for Talon

- Many poor families that cannot pay the dowry for the marriage.
- Talon made them come to the Nouvelle France (orphans....)
- Departure from the harbour of La Rochelle.
- The women could find single men that had to be married otherwise they would loose their rights to hunt (*coureurs de bois – coureurs de jupons*)



## 1671 - demographic balance reached

- Jean Talon informed the French authorities that it was not necessary to send women from France
- The marquis de Lahontan who came in Canada, criticized the way the colony imported *filles de petite vertu* (controversy, rumors?) Hope for more freedom in the « new world »



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# The role of the interpreters

- Étienne Brûlé (1592-1633) arrived in Québec and learnt algonquin and huron to become an interpreter
- The Hurons had at that time the control on fur trade
- Jean Nicollet (1598-1642) also became a « *truchement* » (interpreter) and lived in the First Nations to explore and discover the sea of China. Champlain used these interpreters to negotiate with the different nations. Nicollet was the first one who discovered Northwestern territories.

# The Jesuits in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

- A Company that came to Canada (the Jesuits are very interested in the culture of the First Nations and in sciences)
- They explored the territory and took notes during their travels
- Creation of Sainte-Marie among the Hurons (French Jesuit settlement in Wendake) from 1639 to 1649 (Ontario). Killed by the Iroquois (The « Canadian Martyrs »)

## **Fur-traders (Pierre-Esprit Radisson)**

- Pierre-Esprit Radisson (1636-1710)
- Captured by the Iroquois, has learnt the language of the Iroquois
- Médard des Groseilliers (1618-1696) was the brother-in-law of Radisson and has worked with him. They mapped the Great Lakes
- Formation of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670.





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## René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687)

- One of the last French « explorers » who could travel until Louisiana.
- Sense of megalomania



# Conclusions

- The land did not belong to the Indigenous tribes, they belonged to the land (strong cultural difference). Strong interest for fur trade with *coureurs de bois*. Survival for the colony of *Nouvelle France*
- Four types of colonizers (geographers, navigators, explorers, missionaries)
- Peace of 1701 of the French Canadians with the First Nations



# Conclusions

- Spirit of freedom in the *Nouvelle France* where the French Canadians became different from the French (language, culture, way of life...).  
The word « Canadiens français » was used after 1840 until 1960 when they called themselves « Québécois ».
- Isolation of « Nouvelle France » from France (for the kingdom of France, the colony costs a lot). The idea is to contain the expansion of the British Empire. The « Nouvelle Angleterre » has a demographic boom and a strong support from England.

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