

Chapter 3 - European Settlement of Canada to 1759

Canada

There is a flow of new studies on the initial discovery of North America. Evidence of groups arriving by sea is being uncovered but no framework of discovery has been put together. Generally, the Vikings are credited with first establishing settlements in the new world. The best documented is at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland (a National Park) which was established about 1000 AD. Centuries later, prior to Cabot's voyage (1497) to the St. Lawrence, fishing vessels from Portugal, France, Britain, and Spain were fishing the Grand Banks. There is historical evidence that Sinclair, the Earl of Orkney from Scotland was fishing on the Banks as early as 1398 but they and others kept this a secret. From the early 1500's to Canada's founding in 1867 represents over 300 years of history, double the period since 1867. Over this early period there was more and more exploration, settlement, conflict, missionary ventures and trade which created a complex, diffuse, episodic mosaic of events that are the basis of a number of books. Only some highlights and interesting aspects will be described.

A French privateer Jean Anco sent two ships to Newfoundland in 1520 under the command of the brothers Parmentier. They seized ships, looted fishing stations and burned settlements. French domination of the area continued for a half century until Britain sent privateers and naval vessels to lay claim to Newfoundland. This continued battle between France and England lasted for several centuries as the fish from this area was a major source of food for Europe. The large number of ships coming to the area and the value of the cargo led to piracy and the establishment of a Vice-Admiralty Court along with naval vessels to protect the fishing fleets. In 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert declared Newfoundland to be a British possession, the first colony in North America. The first British settlement in Newfoundland was at Cupper's Cove, now Cupids, in 1610. Piracy and privateers in the New World were a real menace over several centuries and gave rise to many incredible adventures. Generally, temporary settlements were established in Newfoundland to process fish but permanent settlements were discouraged and the population grew slowly.

In 1534 Jacques Cartier landed at Gaspé and claimed the land for France. This claim to the mainland was to remain French hands for 225 years until the Conquest by Wolfe in 1759. Cartier made several voyages of discovery along the St. Lawrence River and gave the river its name when he landed on the day of the Feast of St. Lawrence. He is reported to have given the name Canada to the area. One version is that the name was based on a misunderstanding when he asked his Indian guide the name of the place and received the response Kanata, meaning "a collection of huts". A less charitable explanation is that the guide's reply was something similar but meaning "I don't know".

About 1620 the King of England made a grant to Sir William Alexander, a Scottish nobleman, giving him title to the area of Acadia, now known as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This was while the French were there and claimed it as French territory! This grant had little impact on the area, however, it led to the use of the name New Scotland or Nova Scotia. This was the same time that the Pilgrim Fathers landed in North America and had the local Indians show them how to grow corn, hunt turkeys and organize a Thanksgiving dinner. It is reported that in 1619 a Dutch ship arrived in Virginia with African slaves and sold some to the colony beginning a long and nasty history of slavery in the United States. Soon after the American colonies were established wars with the Indians began and continued for several centuries.

Soon after 1620 France and Britain were at war and the Kirke brothers secured letters of marque that gave them authority from the King of England to attack the ships of other nations, in effect to be a privateer. In 1627 they set out with 5 ships, to attack the French and the fur trade of North America. Their objective was Tadoussac a key trading post on the St. Lawrence at the mouth of the Saguenay River near Quebec City. The furs from the Hudson Bay region flowed down to this post and the Kirke brothers were determined to take the supply that was gathered awaiting shipment to France. This they did, then a fleet of French merchant ships arrived with settlers, supplies for Quebec and some soldiers. They were all seized and taken to England. The next year the Kirke brothers returned to Tadoussac and captured another year's shipment of furs and then went on to Quebec where Champlain surrendered as the town was out of supplies and unable to resist an attack. It is a little known fact that the Kirke brothers ruled North America for about 5 years until England returned it to the French, an agreement based on French funding to pay off the British national debts. They were later part of a consortium, The Company of Adventurers to Newfoundland, that became proprietors of Newfoundland in 1637. In 1639 David Kirke became governor of Newfoundland.

Whaling fleets came to the St. Lawrence river from Europe at an early stage as there was, and still is, a concentration of whales at the junction of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence. The Saguenay is not really a river but a deep fjord that empties into the St. Lawrence River. The mixture of salt and fresh water create an ideal habitat for whales as the mix of fresh and salt water seem to create a positive environment for the whales. This is now a popular whale watching site. There were also many whales in the Bay of Fundy that attracted whalers from Europe and New England. In addition to fish and furs the whaling industry was an important attraction in the New World as whales yielded whale oil for lamps, including street lamps, cartilage for corset stays, and meat.

The early voyages of discovery to North America began with the intent of finding a passage to China. Knowing the world was round, the English sent several expeditions West to find the passage. The desperate search for the Northwest Passage was based on finding a trade route to the Orient. The established trade routes through the Mediterranean were blocked by the Turkish empire and the Portuguese were sailing around the Cape of

Good Hope and dominating trade with the Spice Isles in Asia. The Dutch were also active in acquiring trading posts and colonies in Asia along with exploring the area being the first to discover Australia and New Zealand.

One of the earliest explorers to sail west was Christopher Columbus who arrived in the Caribbean in 1492. Later there were visits by John Cabot, Giovanni de Verrazano and several more who visited South America. The voyages of John Cabot (1497) on behalf of England provided information on the existence of the mainland of North America and the St Lawrence River. More importantly their news of the abundant fish off the coast led to many fishing fleets coming to this region. Later, Sir Martin Frobisher (1577) made three voyages to find the Northwest Passage without success. His exploits are an interesting part of Canadian history.

Jacques Cartier sailing up the St. Lawrence river in 1534 on his first voyage established communication with the Indians near Quebec City. On a later voyage (1541) he left some people to establish a colony at Montreal but it only lasted two years. Scurvy was a major problem for the settlers and they were fortunate that Domagaya, an Indian chief, informed Cartier that a cure using the leaves and bark of a fir tree boiled in water would cure them (spruce beer).

One of the first settlements on the mainland of Canada was established by Pierre du Gua, Sieur du Monts who along with Champlain established a settlement at Port Royal, near Annapolis Royal, in Nova Scotia in 1605. The significance of this was that Louis Hebert, an apothecary from Paris, accompanied him and spent several years there. Later (1617) he went to Quebec City (established in 1608 by Champlain) and played an important role in its growth, mainly in promoting agriculture. When he first arrived in Quebec City (Donacona) there were few families there mainly engaged in the fur trade. By 1620 the Atlantic coast and area surrounding the St. Lawrence were reasonably well known and maps had been made. Settlers quickly established farms along the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal and priests ventured even further into Huronia (along the shores of Lake Huron) where the Huron Indians had villages engaged in agriculture. In 1635 and 1640 major epidemics spread to this region and more than half the people died. Later the Iroquois attacked and sacked the region (1649) in order to become the fur trade middle men. This war resulted in bringing an end to the Huron native settlements. Fort Frontenac, now Kingston, was established by LaSalle in 1672 as a trading post to intercept furs moving to the Hudson river and American colonies. This move was supported by the Iroquois settled in the region.

New France was declared a Royal Province in 1663 replacing the various chartered companies that had been trading in Canada to that point. Settlers were encouraged and the seigniorial system retained. These trading companies traded mostly in the St. Lawrence area with furs flowing in from further West and from Hudson's Bay. Missionaries and some traders went as far north as James Bay and west to the Great Lakes where Jesuit

missions were established near tribes that had established permanent settlements near good agricultural or fishing sites. Religious orders, traders and explorers sent out by Intendant Talon and later, Frontenac, mapped and explored this large area. This was part of the continuing search for the Northwest Passage and led to an understanding of the land mass north of the St. Lawrence to the Arctic. The Indian stories of a great river, the Mississippi running south was also known and the French entertained a hope that it led to the Pacific but they realized that it was likely that it emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. Marquette and Joliet were the first to explore the Mississippi with Indian guides and determine its mouth. This is another instance of the reliance of the early Europeans on the geographic knowledge of the Indians. LaSalle continued exploring this area and gaining treaties with the various Indian tribes who lived along the river and cultivated crops. It was the intent of the Jesuits to leave these tribes in the area but to have them become Christian, educated and trained much the same as Europeans all under the control of the Jesuit order. This was similar to their plan for Paraguay in South America.

Etienne Brule is a Canadian hero. He went to live with the Indians at an early age, learned their language and travelled extensively around the Great Lakes as early as 1612. He also travelled south as far as Chesapeake Bay. He returned to live at Tadoussac near the mouth of the Saguenay River and collaborated with the Kirke brothers when they captured Tadoussac then helping them when they attacked Quebec City. Later he returned to the Great Lakes and was killed by the Huron, with whom he had lived, in 1633.

Tales of bravery and daring exploits from the savage new land began to appear. One family, that of Charles Le Moyne, in the fur trade stands out. Several sons achieved distinction but his third son Pierre, Sieur d'Iberville, is amazing. In 1686 he was second in command of the De Troyes expedition that set out from Quebec City to capture the English forts in James Bay, about 850 miles away. Over a hundred men went up the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers then north along some smaller rivers all the way to James Bay where they captured 3 forts. An amazing aspect of this campaign was that he only lost one man. From the journals maintained it appears that despite the hardships and resultant fatigue involved the men were quite healthy over a period of several months. The main problem for them, and many other expeditions in Canada, was obtaining food. In this case they were fortunate to come across a number of groups of Indians who were helpful in providing food for them. This was just one of the events that took place as over the next 30 years the French and English established forts in the Hudson Bay area and periodically attacked one another. The pendulum of success swung back and forth until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 when exclusive English rights to the area were recognized.

Pierre LeMoyne, after the James Bay expedition, went on to lead several sea borne expeditions to Hudson's Bay. On his first expedition to James Bay he seized an English ship and sailed it back to Quebec. In 1689, with one ship he captured Port Nelson in Hudson's Bay and three English men-of-war in naval combat. In 1696 he captured most of Newfoundland then sailed to Hudson's Bay in a small ship where he lost the ship but

captured two larger English war ships and sunk a third. He harried the English from Maine to the Caribbean and along the Gulf of Mexico. In 1703 he became the first French governor of Louisiana. He died in Havana of yellow fever in 1706 at the age of 45.

In New France the population grew slowly from 150 in 1633 to 2500 in 1663 then more rapidly to 15,000 in 1700. This growth along the St Lawrence was due to the French government sending more settlers, creating security for the colony which had been devastated by Iroquois raids, and the high birth rate among the population. Most of the population was in farms and towns along the St. Lawrence River. In Montreal, founded in 1642, the western fur trade was dominant but required very little manpower for the substantial rewards which resulted. French traders and voyageurs in small numbers travelled west and the Indians brought the furs to various sites to trade for pots, axes, beads, cloth, brandy and firearms. In this trade the Hudson's Bay Company had an advantage by sending ships to Hudson's Bay as they were able to make direct contact with the northern tribes along the rivers emptying into the bay and to transport heavier trade goods. The French strategy was to keep the ties with the Western Indians and often subsidized the fur trade to maintain control of the area to the West and South of the Great Lakes. There was also a growing trade between New France and the Caribbean to which grains and fish were sent. The settlers along the St. Lawrence also developed an active trade for many years with Louisbourg on Cape Breton based on supplies needed for building a large fort and maintaining a large number of troops.

In Acadia, now Nova Scotia, there was a continuous battle between the American colonies and the French during the life of the colony. A good deal of the warfare consisted of raids and the capture of ships by privateers from New England. The capture of Port Royal by the British and the ceding of Acadia to Britain (1710) provided a rich farmland and about 1500 industrious settlers. There was some dispute as to the extent of Acadia that was given to the British. The French interpretation was that this was only the mainland of Nova Scotia and excluded Northern Maine, New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Ile Royale (PEI). The French speaking inhabitants of Nova Scotia were given one year to move to French territory or remain as British subjects. Most remained but issues of language, religion and land tenure were unsettled.

Halifax was founded as the capital of Nova Scotia in 1749 and the concern over the loyalty of the population to Britain became an issue. An oath of loyalty was demanded and when it wasn't provided the Governor acted to deport the Acadians in 1755. Over 6,000 were expelled to sites all over the world, largely Australia but also the Caribbean and Louisiana. There was some resistance and some escaped deportation by hiding in the interior and later emerging and continuing to live in their historic areas, some later returned from abroad. Britain spent large sums to settle British and American colonists in Nova Scotia to replace the Acadians. Later, foreign Protestants from Europe were recruited. In 1758, after the capture of Louisbourg in Cape Breton, Cape Breton became a British Colony and later joined Nova Scotia.

The French government spent an enormous amount of money building forts at Niagara, Quebec and Louisbourg (1720) to ensure the protection of their North American colonies. LaSalle funded the construction of Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario. Eventually the population at the time of the Conquest in 1759 was about 70,000. With the St. Lawrence river as the main highway there were few roads and most settlements and farms were along a water way. A road had been built from Quebec City to Montreal in 1734 and this was one of the few that existed at that time. This was a very weak colony at the far end of an ocean dominated by the English. There were continuous battles between the French and the British colonies over expansion of the British colonies (New England) to the West. The main battleground was the Ohio valley which had good farmland and was the entrance to the Mississippi river system. The French had mapped and explored most of the Mississippi (LaSalle) and Missouri and concluded treaties with the various tribes. This flowed from the work of Bourgemont who is credited with the exploration of this area in the period 1698-1725. To the French the political issues stemming from a desire to control the area based on treaties with the various tribes, establishing trading posts and missions and fighting to retain this area and keep the British colonies out. It is from this period that many of the French place names originated - Duquesne, Fond du Lac, Terre Haute, St. Louis, Lacrosse, Joliet. There are many books about the battles and events in this area and era.

Along the Atlantic coast British colonies had been established in Massachusetts, Virginia, and the Carolinas and they developed an active trade with England and the Caribbean. They exported rum, tobacco, fish, fur, cotton, grain and even medicinal plants such as snake root and ginger to Britain and this was traded for manufactured goods some of which was traded with the Indians. The Netherlands also had a colony at New Amsterdam founded in 1614, later named New York, that was a leading trade centre in North America. Trade goods, mainly alcohol and cloth would be sent from the Netherlands to Africa and traded for slaves that would be taken to the Dutch plantations in Brazil or the Caribbean. The use of slaves for sugar plantations was initiated by the Portuguese who had slave labor colonies on islands close to Europe and from their knowledge of the slave trade then dealt with the slave traders in West Africa to obtain slaves for the plantations in the New World. This trade pattern was copied by the Dutch, English and French. The Caribbean islands, mainly the French islands would send molasses to New England where it was distilled into rum and sent on to Europe then Africa. At one point 80% of New England exports were claimed to be alcohol beverages. This was a major trade pattern that lasted a long time and it is estimated that over a century 11 million slaves were sent to South America and the Caribbean. There were also slaves in Canada under both French and British rule but these were mostly household slaves rather than large numbers in plantations. Cotton, sugar, molasses and tobacco from Caribbean and Brazilian plantations would then be sent to New Amsterdam. Furs, fish, rum and timber would then be sent to Europe. This trade pattern made New Amsterdam, and later New York a major trade centre and the Dutch colony culture exerted a strong influence in North America even after it was taken over by the British as the colony was much more open and liberal than the intolerant religious English

colonies.

The early explorers to North America first became aware of the availability of furs and the ease of trading with the natives who wanted whisky, iron products, cloth and decorative beads. From the perspective of the Indians, the furs had relatively little value in comparison to the importance of the trade goods. The other advantage to the Europeans is that the Indians would do the hunting and trapping and sell them high quality furs which were in demand in Europe for fashion reasons at a time when the furs from Northern and Eastern Europe were being depleted. An active, lucrative fur trade was established and continued to grow until after Canada was established as an independent country. In many ways it was the key element in the early development of Canada.

The fur trade was initially along the St. Lawrence River and the Hudson River in what is now New York State. As the trade developed the Indians in these areas depleted the furs available and became the middle men assisting in the expansion of the fur trade and provided guides and canoes for the Europeans to penetrate the wilderness. Initially the French developed the fur trade along the St. Lawrence River and the Dutch along the Hudson River. When the English purchased New York from the Dutch in 1664 they in turn took over the fur trade and in the process developed a close relationship with the Iroquois tribes in up state New York, a key factor in the history of the area as the Iroquois had enormous influence in the surrounding area. The Iroquois remained active in the fur trade with many of them going west with the traders as far as the Rocky Mountains.

In 1670 the King of England granted a charter to the Hudson's Bay Company for the exclusive trade in the area draining into Hudson's Bay. Forts were established in Hudson's Bay and the Indians brought furs to the forts which were located at the mouth of the rivers draining the interior and later established posts in the interior. To offset this English threat, France began to establish trading posts in the James Bay watershed, Great Lakes region, Detroit and along the Mississippi. Beginning about 1701 La Verendrye began to explore the area to the West of the Great Lakes. He was convinced that he would find a river flowing west to the ocean. Although he spent 15 years exploring as far as the Rocky Mountains and establishing trading posts in Manitoba (Portage La Prairie) he never found the ocean. He did, however, prevent the Hudson Bay Company from extending its monopoly over the whole area. It was some time later due to the growing competition of the Northwest Company that the Hudson's Bay began to establish trading posts in the interior.

On the West Coast, voyages of discovery by Capt. Cook (1778) and Capt. Juan Perez (1774) identified the Pacific boundary of North America. It also initiated the trade in sea otter pelts which began when some were sold in China at very high prices. This enabled the large Indian population on the West Coast to obtain metal, principally iron, to use in working wood. The European trade with China had been difficult because the Chinese had little use for many of the trade goods from Europe. The success in trading sea otter pelts formed the basis for trade with European ships sailing around South America to the British

Northwest (now BC and Oregon coast), trading with the natives for otter pelts then sailing on to China to trade the pelts for silk, fabric, spices and precious jewelry.

The European countries were much more interested in the wealth of the Caribbean and the Spice Isles in South Asia rather than North America up to 1755. These regions were extremely profitable and became the focus of pirates and battles. It was only with the Seven Years War, 1756 to 1763, that attention was again focused on North America where France and England sought to dominate the area, partly for trade (sugar in the Caribbean was extremely profitable in this period) but also because there was still the hope that a Northwest Passage would be found to enable trade with Asia. These voyages continued up to the time of the Franklin expeditions (about 1850) and which resulted in his death. The Seven Years War, while particularly important in our North American view, was really a world war with France and England fighting battles in Europe, India and on the world oceans as well as in North America. A medical advance at the time was the use of lime juice which was discovered to be a preventive measure for scurvy. The long voyages of sailing ships resulted in many deaths from scurvy and malnutrition as the food and water on the ships deteriorated quickly. Lime juice was used by the British navy from this time onwards until fresh vegetables were able to be preserved and used on vessels. The difficulty in preserving food on long voyages led to ships carrying livestock and using beer and rum for the sailors instead of water which became contaminated on long voyages.

In the period 1725 to 1775 Europe was undergoing an agricultural revolution with many advances in agriculture and the incorporation of new foods such as corn and potatoes which originated in South America. Potatoes came to Europe from Peru with the Spanish treasures in the 1500s but were accepted only slowly, being used for pig food in Spain, banned in France and condemned in Scotland. The Prussians, however, saw this as a valuable source of food and encouraged its use. It enabled peasants to grow much more food in a field and to improve their well being. Parmentier, a French pharmacist serving with Napoleon, was captured by the Prussians and as a prisoner existed on potatoes. When he was released he influenced Napoleon to promote the growth of potatoes in France and captured countries to provide the food for the public and for troops on campaign. Agricultural developments were based on scientific discoveries, the wealth from America (gold and silver from the Spanish possessions in Mexico and Peru), and increased trade which made more products and information available.

In Britain the economic boom allowed people to get better jobs, marry earlier and have larger families resulting in a rapid population growth. Disease was under control and there were fewer deaths than in France and Spain. The population in the European countries was growing slowly as there was slower growth in those countries that did not have economic success. The advantages from population and economic growth were substantial and played a major role in the relative fortunes of countries. Smallpox was a scourge in Europe with epidemics depleting the population in dense areas as the mortality was about 40%. By 1776 smallpox had virtually disappeared in Britain due to inoculation. In Britain the

enclosures that shifted agriculture to large scale farming on estates rather than a large number of freeholds worked by families were much more efficient and yielded much more income that could be used for further economic development. There was also a growth in population which was available for emigration to colonies and to work in factories that were being established. This was the infrastructure for the Industrial Revolution.

Health care in Canada previous to 1759 was primarily hospital care for seriously ill patients provided by religious orders and by some physicians from France. In Quebec City the Nursing Sister of St. Augustine at Hotel Dieu included some trained in pharmacy. They were established early in the 1600's and the lay missionaries, mostly women, played an important role in providing health care to the Indians in the area. This was the origin of the Ursuline and Augustinian Hospitalieres. In Montreal Jeanne Mance was a lay-worker and performed the duties of a pharmacist. She was among the initial colonists to found Ville Marie, now Montreal, in 1642. Her dispensary was the first in Canada, after Quebec City, and she established the hospital Hotel Dieu in 1642. She was an exceptional person who exemplified bravery in the face of Iroquois attacks and commitment to the colony (a federal government building in Ottawa that houses Health Canada is named after her). As late as 1734 there was still no other dispensary in the colony and the Sisters continued to compound and dispense medication to the sick including the Indians. Medication at the time consisted of relatively few substances of varying quality and availability. Their use was based more on hope than effectiveness. The majority of the population at that time were Indians and had their own traditional method of health care although they looked to missionaries and traders for care and medicine when available.

In the West where the tribes were nomadic the practice of leaving the sick and aged behind during moves was often followed. With the arrival of the white man and the introduction of new diseases the natives were not able to deal with the epidemics brought to America and many perished from smallpox in the epidemics of 1732 and 1781 (Jenner finally published his work on a vaccination for smallpox in 1798) and into the mid 1800's. Even the less serious diseases of measles, whooping cough and mumps had a more destructive impact on Indians. It is to the credit of the Hudson's Bay Company, and later by missionaries and the North West Mounted Police, that they provided some assistance, both medical and economic, to help the Indians through the epidemics. The practice of abandoning the sick and elderly was replaced by tribes leaving these people near the trading posts or missions where they were looked after. This resulted in keeping the Indians closer to the posts and provided a work force to collect food by hunting and fishing. Food for the trading posts and traders was a major concern throughout the fur trade period and there were a growing number of people to feed and the supply of food was unpredictable. The Indians had always been at risk of starvation.

It should be remembered that the health services were provided by health professionals mainly to the affluent. For most there were no health services. Equally important to the population were remedies based on prayer, magic, divine supplication and healing shrines.

For many of the people these remedies "worked" just as placebos work in the treatment of disease. There were also many charlatans and quacks who attempted to sell remedies and as the population grew the number of remedies available increased. For the working poor in Europe and Canada there was little money to pay health professionals or for medication. For the most part they had access only to crude family remedies, prayer, some community services linked to public health and alcohol. Alcohol use was widespread as it was a major trade item, a food source and often used as a part of a workers salary. For illness the medicinal value of alcohol was highly valued. The trade in alcohol was very large in North America and a vital part of social intercourse and trade with the Indians. It was only much later that the strict Protestant religious groups exerted political pressure to suppress alcohol in Canada. Canadian restrictions on alcohol use are among the most stringent in Western industrial countries.

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