

Champlain

Among the Mohawk, 1609

*A SOLDIER-HUMANIST FIGHTS A
WAR FOR PEACE IN NORTH AMERICA*



SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN



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Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

A SOLDIER-HUMANIST FIGHTS A WAR FOR PEACE IN NORTH AMERICA

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Artist Henri Beau imagined Samuel de Champlain on July 3, 1608, picking the site for the first permanent colony in New France at Quebec on the St. Lawrence river.



1570 and probably baptized Protestant, he grew up in a prosperous maritime family and was schooled by his father, who had risen through the ranks from seaman, pilot, and master to captain, merchant, and ship owner. Champlain came of age in a dark period, when horrific wars of religion had shattered France.

The United States has experienced one civil war, in which 600,000 people died over four years. The French people suffered nine civil wars of religion in nearly 40 years (1562–98). More than 2 million died, and atrocities beyond description

occurred. Champlain fought in the largest of these wars, following an extraordinary leader who would become Henry IV, founder of the Bourbon dynasty. The king became the young Champlain's mentor, model, patron, and friend. Both men converted to Catholicism but always defended toleration for Protestants.

War was their profession. While always keeping a soldier's creed of honor, duty, courage, and loyalty to a larger cause, their feelings about war changed with the horrors they encountered. These veteran campaigners came to hate war for its cruelty,



A few generations ago, American colonial history centered on a single narrative that flowed from Jamestown in 1607 to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Today early American history has blossomed into a braided narrative with many story lines.

A starting point might be four small beginnings, far apart in space but close in time. On April 26, 1607, Capt. John Smith and his comrades founded Jamestown in Virginia. Four months later, in mid-August 1607, Capt. George Popham established a New England colony near Pemaquid in Maine. The following year, during the spring and summer of 1608, Spanish colonists, led by Capt. Martínez de Montoya, built a permanent settlement at Santa Fe in the region they called New Mexico. And on July 3, 1608, Capt. Samuel de Champlain founded the first permanent colony in New

France at Quebec. The stories that began to unfold at these places shaped much of modern North America.

One of the most interesting of those small beginnings was New France. For more than 30 years the central figure was the extraordinary Champlain. He left six fascinating books of travels, filled with many superb maps and illustrations. His writings tell much about his actions but little about the man, and nearly nothing about his inner life.

Champlain came from Brouage, a little town on the Bay of Biscay on the Atlantic coast of France. A busy place in his youth, it served as the center of a lucrative salt trade. Today this small seaport lies quietly a mile from the sea. Born around

Champlain's navigation and extensive mapping was aided by his astrolabe, top right, which he lost in 1613 but was improbably recovered by a farm boy in 1867.



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destruction, and terrible waste. They knew, however, that some of the world's evils overshadow even war. In a world of cruelty and violence, they dedicated themselves to fighting for peace and humanity.

Henry and his army won their last great struggle in 1598, giving France the Peace of Vervins and toleration under the Edict of Nantes. Henry next set his sights on bringing a general peace to Europe. Soon a web of peace treaties opened the Atlantic to commerce and made North America accessible for those many colonial beginnings in 1607 and 1608. It was a pivot point in American history.

In 1599 he traveled through Spanish America on a long espionage mission. Upon its completion, Champlain delivered a long report called a *Bref discours* that outlined the strengths and resources of the Spanish empire in detail. Champlain found the people he variously called *Indiens* or *sauvages* fascinating. Impressed by their high intelligence, he was shocked by the cruelty and violence they had suffered under the Spanish. To illustrate the report, Champlain added his own luminous watercolors of their sufferings: Indians burned alive for heresy; Indians cudgelled on the orders of priests for not attending mass; Indians and

African slaves compelled to dive to lethal depths in the pearl fisheries of Margarita Island off the coast of Venezuela. Altogether the *Bref discours* was a report on how not to found an empire in America.

Impressed with the report, King Henry gave Champlain a pension and the assignment to work with other experts in the basement of the Louvre on the colonization of North

America. Champlain closely studied the history of earlier French settlements, which had all ended in disaster. He also traveled to the Atlantic ports of France, interviewing fishermen who knew about America and

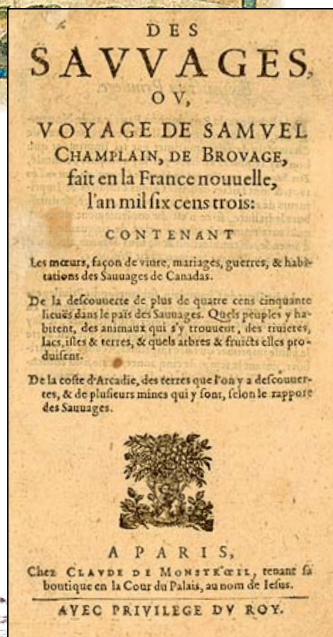
the dangerous waters of the North Atlantic. He composed what he called his *grand dessein* for France in North America, a plan in large part based on a dream of peace and humanity, of amity and concord among the peoples of Europe and America.

Champlain pulled many others into his grand design, moving in a number of circles, all of which revolved around Henry IV. One consisted of the men who would go eventually with him to America: Pierre Dugua, the sieur de Mons; Marc Lescarbot; Jean de Poutrincourt; and François Gravé du Pont, a grizzled mariner from Saint-Malo whom he called Pont-Gravé. His friends at court formed another circle: Pierre Jeannin, several Sillerys and Brularts, and his old commander, the Comte de Cossé-Brissac, who offered advice and urgent support.

These men all shared a common bond as Christian humanists. While a few were Protestants, most embraced the literal Catholic idea of a universal faith. Men of learning, they were full of curiosity about the world and all its peoples. In their broad spirit of humanity, they had inherited the values of the Renaissance; in time, their work would inspire the Enlightenment. In a difficult time, they kept the idea of humanism alive; in doing so, they became important world figures.

Together they carefully prepared for a new sort of European presence in America, one that stressed peaceful cohabitation with the Indians, trading actively, and exploring the continent together. Pont-Gravé made a voyage in 1602 and persuaded Indian leaders to allow two young Montagnais "princes," as the Pont-Gravé called them, to come to France, learn the language, and serve as translators. In 1603 they all

*Champlain's horror at Spanish cruelty toward Indians in the West Indies prompted him to draw the illustration, center, for his manuscript *Bref discours*, and vow to treat Indians he encountered humanely, which he later described in his 1603 book, *Des Sauvages*, left.*



The king was deeply interested in America, particularly the large area labeled on world maps as Nova Francia, after voyages of Jacques Cartier in the 16th century. Henry intended to turn that geographical expression into an empire called la Nouvelle France. Champlain got a new job.

He had already begun to serve the king as a secret agent.



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sailed to the St. Lawrence on a voyage of reconnaissance, arriving on May 26, 1603, at the little port of Tadoussac near the Saguenay River. Champlain and Pont-Gravé looked across the river and saw a huge gathering of Indians from many nations, including Montagnais, Algonquian, and Etchemin, the latter being Champlain's name for the nations living in what is now the state of Maine.

The two Frenchmen and the young Montagnais translators crossed the river, walked unarmed into the camp, and were invited to join a *tabagie*, or tobacco feast. Champlain, Pont-Gravé, and the representatives of these many Indian nations talked together through the night and into the next day. The informal alliance they formed would last for many generations, and the legacy of this first *tabagie* still lives on. All were warriors in search of peace, who were open and candid, learned to respect each other's vital interests, and created an alliance founded on cohabitation, trade, and mutual support against attacks by others.

After this beginning, other voyages followed. Champlain helped to found French settlements on the St. Croix River in 1604, in Acadia (now Nova Scotia) in 1605–6, and at Quebec. He explored the country, met with many other Indian nations, and forged alliances with more than 50 of them—more than any European leader of his time.

Champlain's special pattern of relating with the Indians made the history of New France fundamentally different than those of New Spain, New England, New Netherland, and Virginia. The Spanish conquistadors sought to subjugate the Indians. The English pushed the Indians

away, built a big "pale" in Virginia, and forbade Indians from crossing it unless they presented a special passport. Only the French established a consistent policy of peaceful cohabitation, and something of its spirit persists in North America to this day.

A MAJOR THREAT TO CHAMPLAIN'S DESIGN for New France was incessant warfare among the Indian nations in the St. Lawrence Valley. Much of it pitted the Iroquois League, and especially the Mohawk nation, against the Algonquian and Montagnais to the north, the Huron to the west, and the Etchemin to the east. As long as it continued, there could



be no peace in the St. Lawrence Valley, no security for trade, and no hope for the dream of American Indians and Europeans living together in peace.

Champlain believed that a major cause of war was fear, and his remedy was to seek peace through diplomacy. To that end he had built alliances among the Montagnais, Algonquian, Huron, and other nations. But the Iroquois League proved difficult to work with. One historian of the Iroquois observes that by the start of the 17th century they were "at odds with all their neighbors—Algonquin and Huron to the north, Mahican on the east, and Susquehannock to the south." Many Indian nations in the Northeast were at war with some of their neighbors. The Iroquois, however, were

at war with nearly all of theirs. They had a reputation for skill in war, among many warrior nations; they were also known for cruelty in a cruel world.

In 1608 Champlain had promised to aid the Indian nations of the St. Lawrence Valley when the Iroquois attacked them. At the same time, he understood that the Iroquois were victims as well as aggressors, so he sent peace feelers through a captive Mohawk woman. These overtures accomplished nothing. Mohawk war parties continued to attack the St. Lawrence Indians.

After a long and difficult winter of 1608 and 1609 in Quebec, Champlain decided that peace could be achieved only by concerted military action against the Mohawk. He did not intend a war of conquest. Instead he envisioned that a coalition of Montagnais, Algonquian, and Huron, with French support, might deliver one or two sharp blows that could deter future Mohawk attacks by raising the cost of their raiding to the north.

When Champlain met Pont-Gravé at Tadoussac on June 7, he laid out a bold plan for "certain explorations in the interior" and made clear his intention to enter "the country of the Iroquois" with "our allies the Montagnais." Both men knew that this plan would mean a fight with some of the most formidable warriors in North America. It was an act of breathtaking audacity, considering the small size of Champlain's force. But what Champlain lacked in mass, he made up in acceleration. He also had the early firearm known as the arquebus, and the Mohawk did not. The sieur de Mons

Champlain detailed one of his maps with carefully rendered, ethnological drawings of his Montaignais Indian allies, center.



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had sent him a few good men who were trained in the use of that difficult weapon. Champlain also had many Indian allies with hundreds of warriors.

ON JUNE 28, 1609, Champlain set out from Quebec with a party of French soldiers and hundreds of Indian warriors. A week later they entered “the country of the Iroquois.” Champlain and his party paddled their canoes south from the St. Lawrence Valley up the river of the Iroquois, known today as the Richelieu River. He wrote, “No Christians but ourselves had ever penetrated this place.” Eventually most of the French and Indians decided to turn back, daunted by what lay ahead, but Champlain pressed on with a war party of only 60 Indians and two Frenchmen at his side. It was a courageous decision. Others would have called it foolhardy to the point of madness.

Champlain and his allies made a portage of about a mile around the rapids on the Richelieu, well into Iroquois country. At the end of each day, the expedition built a semicircular fort on the edge of the river. Some took bark from trees to make wigwams, while others felled big trees to make an abatis of tangled branches around their camp, leaving only the riverbank open as a line of retreat. They sent forward a party of three canoes and nine men to search four or six miles ahead. The scouts found nothing, and all retired for the night. This was one of the first occasions when European soldiers traveled with a large Indian war party in North America.

On July 14, 1609, they reached the large lake from which the river flowed. Champlain exercised his right to name it Lake Champlain on his map, as he and his two French companions may have been the first Europeans to see it. He reckoned its length at 80 to 100 leagues, and later amended his estimate to 50 or



Intent on battling the Mohawk, who threatened his grand plans for peace in the region, Champlain traveled south from Quebec in the summer of 1609, coming across the beautiful lake that he would give his name to.

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60 land leagues, which is roughly correct. He explored both sides of the lake, saw the Green Mountains of Vermont to the east, and to the west sighted the Adirondacks, which are visible from the eastern shore. On the many maps created by Champlain, this lake was the only place where he put his name on the land.

As they moved further south, tensions mounted. On the evening of July 29, 1609, they approached the lake’s southern end; on their right they passed a low peninsula with willow trees and a sandy beach below a steep eroded bank. Beyond the beach Champlain saw a promontory projecting into the water. His Indian allies knew it well. The Iroquois called it “the meeting place of two waters”: *tekontató:ken* or, to European ears, Ticonderoga. The name came from two big, beautiful lakes. Lake George to the south and west was 200 feet above Lake Champlain, draining into it from a height greater than Niagara Falls. The water flowed downward through a run of falls and rapids that the French called a *chute*, entering Lake Champlain at Ticonderoga. For many generations past and to come, Ticonderoga served as one

of the most strategic locations in North America, a key to anyone who wanted to control the long chain of lakes and rivers running from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson. For the Mohawk, it was also a sacred and magical place.

In the night of July 29, as Champlain’s party rounded the promontory of Ticonderoga, their bow paddlers saw shadows stirring on the water ahead of them. As they stared intently into the darkness, the shadows began to assume an earthly form. They were boats of strange appearance, larger than northern birch-bark canoes, and filled with men. The Indians instantly identified them: Mohawk!

Each group sighted the other at about the same time. Both taken by surprise, they turned away and moved in opposite directions. “We retreated into the middle of the lake,” Champlain later wrote. The Mohawk landed on a sand beach between the promontory of Ticonderoga and Willow Point to the north, where a fringe of willow trees still flourishes near the water’s edge, and built a small fort or barricade.

Champlain and his allies remained afloat on the lake and lashed their canoes together

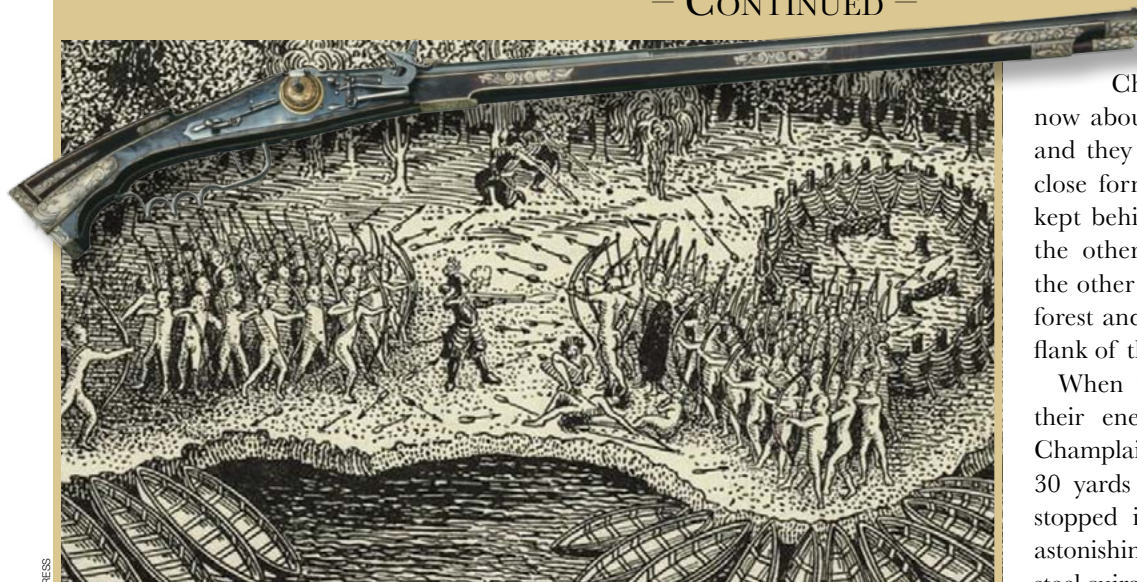


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Champlain, two french soldiers, and his Indian allies confronted a powerful Mohawk party, defeating them convincingly with the aid of Hudson's wheel-lock arquebus à rouet, an early muzzle loading firearm, above.

with poles so as not to become separated in the night. "We were on the water," he wrote, "within bow-shot of their barricades." Songs and cries pierced the night. The Mohawk shouted insults at their enemies. "Our side was not lacking in repartee," Champlain recalled. As dawn approached, both sides prepared for battle. In the darkness before first light, Champlain's Indian allies paddled around the promontory and landed in a secluded spot where they were not under observation. "My companions and I were always kept carefully out of sight, lying flat in the canoes," he wrote. His allies sent scouts ahead to watch the Mohawk fort. The rest assembled in their fighting formation and moved forward toward the Mohawk barricade.

The three Frenchmen remained carefully hidden behind them. Each prepared his weapon, a short-barreled, shoulder-fired arquebus à rouet, Champlain's highly developed wheel-lock weapon that did not require a smoldering matchlock, which might have betrayed their position. Champlain dangerously overloaded his arquebus with four balls.

On Cape Cod in 1605, his weapon had exploded in his hands and nearly killed him. But overloading was highly effective in close combat, so he accepted the risk.

At first light the Mohawk warriors mustered quickly and came out of the fort, many of them wearing wooden armor that was proof against stone arrowheads. Both forces assembled in close formation on opposite sides of a clearing between the water and the woods.

Champlain peered through the ranks of his allies and studied the Mohawk as they emerged from their barricade. He counted 200 warriors, "strong and robust men in their appearance," and he watched as "they advanced slowly to meet us with a gravity and assurance that I greatly admired." The Mohawk were in tight ranks—a disciplined close-order forest phalanx that had defeated many foes. Their wooden armor and shields covered their bodies. In the front were two Mohawks, each wearing three high feathers above their heads. Champlain's Indians told him that the men with the big feathers were chiefs, and "I was to do what I could to kill them."

Champlain's Indian allies were now about 200 yards from the Mohawk, and they began to move forward also in close formation. Once again Champlain kept behind them, remaining invisible to the other side. On Champlain's orders, the other two Frenchmen slipped into the forest and crept forward around the right flank of the Mohawk.

When they were about 50 yards from their enemy, Champlain's allies parted. Champlain strode forward alone until 30 yards from the enemy. The Mohawk stopped in amazement and studied this astonishing figure who wore a burnished steel cuirass and helmet that glittered in the golden light of the morning sun. Then a Mohawk leader raised his bow.

Champlain tells us, "I put my arquebus against my cheek and aimed straight at one of the chiefs." As the Mohawk drew their bowstrings, Champlain fired. There was a mighty crash and a cloud of white smoke. Two chiefs fell dead, and another warrior was mortally wounded—three men brought down by one shot. Champlain's Indian allies raised a great shout, so loud that "one could not have heard the thunder."

The Mohawk were stunned and "greatly frightened." Even so, they fought back bravely. Both sides fired clouds of arrows, and Champlain reloaded his weapon. As he did so, his two French companions emerged on the edge of the forest. They appear to have been veteran fighters—skilled arquebusiers and highly disciplined soldiers. Using the trees for cover, they knelt side by side, steadied their weapons, and took aim. "As I was reloading my arquebus," Champlain wrote, "one of my companions fired a shot from the woods." This second blow was delivered into the flank of the Mohawk formation, and it had a devastating effect. A third chief went down. The tight Mohawk formation shuddered in

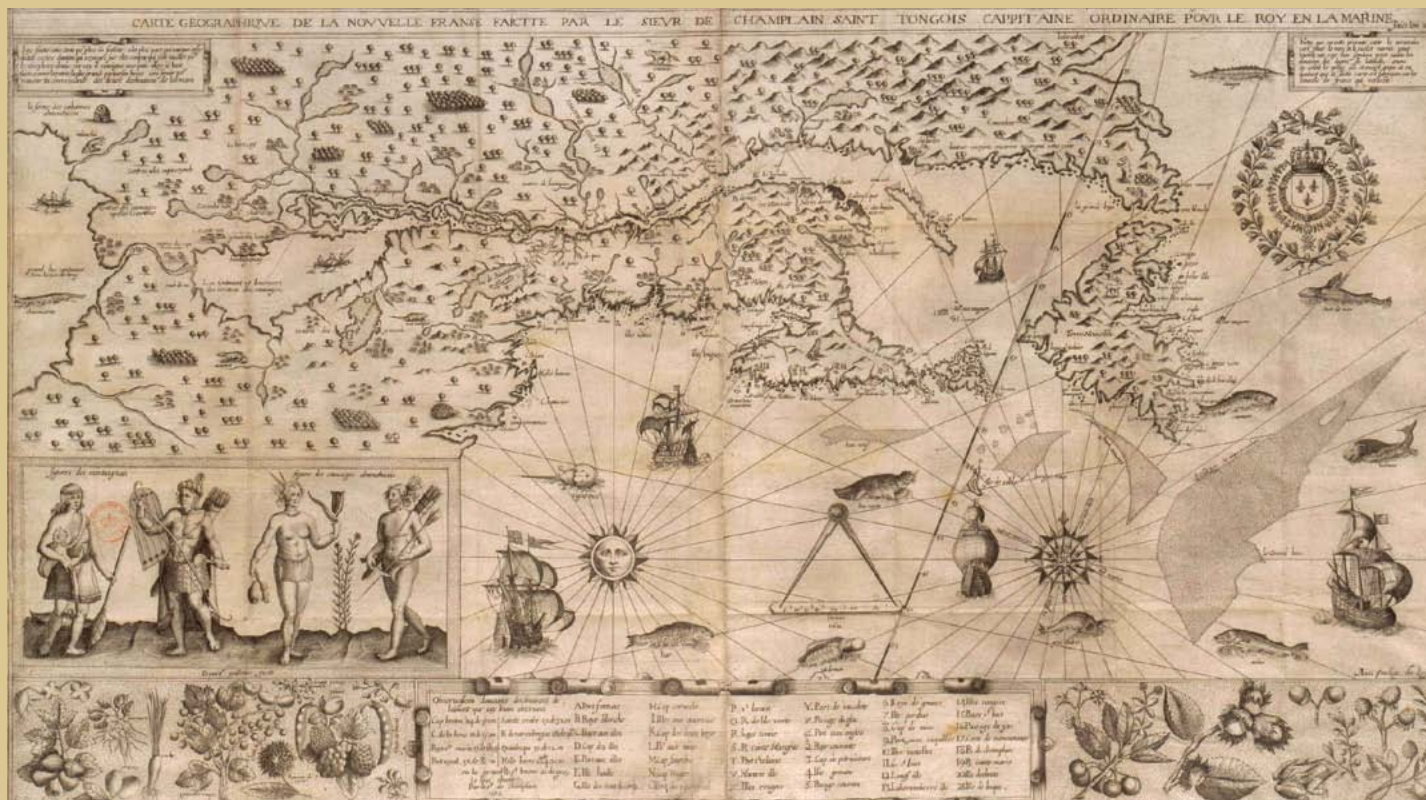


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A master mapmaker, Champlain developed a method of close-in coastal exploration that he called "ferreting," and used it to study thousands of miles of the American coast from Panama to Labrador. His cartographic masterpieces include the 1613 *Carte géographique de la Nouvelle France*, above.

a strange way and suddenly came apart. "It astonished them so much that, seeing their chiefs dead, they lost courage, took to their heels, and abandoned the field and their fort, fleeing into the depth of the forest." Champlain led his Indian allies in a headlong charge. "I pursued them, and laid low still more of them."

Many historians have criticized Champlain for going to war with the Iroquois. Some have written that he initiated hostilities that would continue for two centuries. In the late 20th century, ethnohistorians studying this question came to a different conclusion. They agreed that he did not start these wars, but that the fighting had been going on between the Mohawk and their neighbors to the north long before he arrived.

Further, Iroquois ethnologist William N. Fenton writes, "Nineteenth-century historians to the contrary, this incident did not precipitate a hundred years of Mohawk vengeance against New France." It put a stop to major fighting between the Mohawk and the French for a generation. An ethnologist of the Huron agrees. Bruce Trigger writes of the two battles: "This was the last time that the Mohawks were a serious threat along the St. Lawrence River until the 1630s. Having suffered serious losses in two successive encounters, they avoided armed Frenchmen."

After the battles at Ticonderoga and the Rivière des Iroquois, the Mohawk made several peace overtures to the French. Champlain, however, could not find a way to make lasting peace with the

Iroquois without alienating the Montagnais, Algonquian, and Huron. Even so, he hoped for a modus vivendi between the French and the Mohawk, and he achieved it. A fragile quasi peace was won by force of arms, and it continued for a generation, until 1634. The leaders who followed Champlain in Quebec and Paris (also in Boston, Philadelphia, Williamsburg, and London) were unable to keep it going. They used too much force or too little. Champlain's policy effected a middle way of peace through the carefully calibrated use of limited force. We are only beginning to understand how he did it. ❁

Portions of this essay were adapted from Champlain's Dream by David Hackett Fischer © 2008. Printed with the permission of Simon & Schuster.



Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN VOYAGES, 1604

<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1600-1650/samuel-de-champlain-voyses-1604.php>

INTRODUCTION

France, together with Portugal, Holland, Sweden, and England, followed the lead of Spain. Each nation envied the growing wealth and power of Spain that were derived from its possessions in the New World. Each nation, therefore, saw its future position as dependent upon New World colonies.

The first French voyager of note was Jacques Cartier, who began his explorations of North America in 1534. But Samuel de Champlain was responsible for a series of French explorations into North America in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that resulted in the founding of the first successful French colony at Quebec in 1608. The passage is taken from Champlain's writings, the sense of European competition, particularly with Spain, for the New World is well-developed.

The inclinations of men differ according to their varied dispositions; and each one in his calling has his particular end in view. Some aim at gain, some at glory, some at the public weal. The greater number are engaged in trade, and especially that which is transacted on the sea. Hence arise the principal support of the people, the opulence and honor of states. This is what raised ancient Rome to the sovereignty and mastery over the entire world, and the Venetians to a grandeur equal to that of powerful kings. It has in all times caused maritime towns to abound in riches, among which Alexandria and Tyre are distinguished, and numerous others, which fill up the regions of the interior with the objects of beauty and rarity obtained from foreign nations. For this reason, many princes have striven to find a northerly route to China, in order to facilitate commerce with the Orientals, in the belief that this route would be shorter and less dangerous.

In the year 1496, the king of England commissioned John Cabot and his son Sebastian to engage in this search. About the same time, Don Emanuel, king of Portugal, despatched on the same errand Gaspar

Cortereal, who returned without attaining his object. Resuming his journeys the year after, he died in the undertaking; as did also his brother Michel, who was prosecuting it perseveringly. In the years 1534 and 1535,

Jacques Cartier received a like commission from King Francis I, but was arrested in his course. Six years after, Sieur de Roberval, having renewed it, sent Jean Alfonse of Saintonge farther northward along the coast of Labrador; but he returned as wise as the others.

In the years 1576, 1577, and 1578, Sir Martin Frobisher, an Englishman, made three voyages along the northern coasts. Seven years later, Humphrey Gilbert, also an Englishman, set out with five ships, but suffered shipwreck on Sable Island, where three of his vessels were lost. In the same and two following years, John Davis, an Englishman, made three voyages for the same object; penetrating to the 72d degree, as far as a strait which is called at the present day by his name. After him, Captain Georges made also a voyage in 1590, but in consequence of the ice was compelled to return without having made any discovery. The Hollanders, on their part, had no more precise knowledge in the direction of Nova Zembla.



A mural painting of John Cabot by Giustino Menescardi, 1762, center.

Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN VOYAGES, 1604

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So many voyages and discoveries without result, and attended with so much hardship and expense, have caused us French in late years to attempt a permanent settlement in those lands which we call New France, in the hope of thus realizing more easily this object; since the voyage in search of the desired passage commences on the other side of the ocean, and is made along the coast of this region.

These considerations had induced the Marquis de la Roche, in 1598, to take a commission from the king for making a settlement in the above region. With this object, he landed men and supplies on Sable Island; but, as the conditions which had been accorded to him by his Majesty were not fulfilled, he was obliged to abandon his undertaking, and leave his men there. A year after, Captain Chauvin accepted another commission to transport settlers to the same region; but, as this was shortly after revoked, he prosecuted the matter no farther.

After the above, notwithstanding all these accidents and disappointments, Sieur de Monts desired to attempt what had been given up in despair, and requested a commission for this purpose of his Majesty, being satisfied that the previous enterprises had failed because the undertakers of them had not received assistance, who had not succeeded, in one nor even two years' time, in making the acquaintance of the regions and people there, nor in finding harbors adapted for a settlement. He proposed to his Majesty a means for covering these expenses, without drawing any thing from the royal revenues; viz., by granting to him the monopoly of the fur-trade in this land. This having been granted to him, he made great and excessive outlays, and carried out with him a large number of men of various vocations. Upon his arrival, he caused the necessary number of habitations for his followers

to be constructed. This expenditure he continued for three consecutive years, after which, in consequence of the jealousy and annoyance of certain Basque merchants, together with some from Brittany, the monopoly which had been granted to him was revoked by the Council to the great injury and loss of

Sieur de Monts, who, in consequence of this revocation, was compelled to abandon his entire undertaking, sacrificing his labors and the outfit for his settlement.

But since, a report had been made to the king on the fertility of the soil by him, and by me on the feasibility of discovering the passage to China, without the inconveniences of the ice of the north or the heats of the torrid zone, through which our sailors pass twice in going and twice in returning, with inconceivable hardships and risks, his Majesty directed Sieur de Monts to make a new outfit, and send men to continue what he had commenced. This he did. And, in view of the uncertainty of his commission, he chose a new spot for his settlement, in order to deprive jealous persons of any such distrust as they had previously conceived. He was also influenced by the hope of greater advantages in case of settling in the interior, where the people are civilized, and where it is easier to plant the Christian faith and establish such order as is necessary for the protection of a country, than along the sea-shore, where the savages generally dwell. From this course, he believed the king would derive an inestimable profit; for it is easy to suppose that Europeans will seek out this advantage rather than those of a jealous and intractable disposition to be found on the shores, and the barbarous tribes. ❀



Champlain-

Jacques Cartier's first interview with the Indians at Hochelaga, now Montreal, in 1535, center.

Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

IN HIS OWN WORDS: SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN

CBC NEWS ONLINE | MARCH 5, 2004

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/champlainanniversary/inhisownwords.html>

INDEPTH: CHAMPLAIN ANNIVERSARY

Four centuries ago Europeans were celebrating an unprecedented age of social development and scientific advance established by their recent Renaissance. Early French explorers in North America took the view that the local inhabitants they found here could be useful allies for their knowledge of the lands and rivers, with the bonus of being ripe subjects for religious proselytizing.

Champlain was a cartographer and diarist for many of the transatlantic voyages he served on. He chronicled his 1603 trip to the St. Lawrence in a book called *Des Sauvages*. Ten years later in Paris, he published *Voyages du Sieur de Champlain*, covering his explorations in Acadia from 1604 to 1607.

NOTE: Champlain's writings translated from original French, courtesy the Champlain Society, 1922-36 edition.

TADOUSSAC 1603

“One of the savages whom we had brought began to make his oration...that His Majesty wished them well, and desired to people their country, and to make peace with their enemies (who are the Iroquois)...”

“I think that if any one would show them how to live, and teach them to till the ground, and other matters, they would learn very well; for I assure you that plenty of them have good judgement . . . They have one evil quality in them, which is, that they are given to revenge, and are great liars...”

PENOBSCOT RIVER 1604

“They signified that they were well satisfied, declaring that no greater benefit could come to them than to have our friendship; and that they desired us to settle in their country, and wished to live in peace with their enemies, in order that in future they might hunt the beaver more than they had ever done, and barter these beaver with us in exchange for things necessary for their usage.”



STE-CROIX WINTER 1604-05

“The Indians who live there are few in number. During the winter, when the snow is deepest, they go hunting for moose and other animals, on which they live the greater part of the time. When they go hunting they make use of certain racquets, twice as large as those of our country, which they attach under their feet, and with these they travel over the snow without sinking, both the women and children as well as the men who hunt for the tracks of animals.”

VOYAGE TO GULF OF MAINE JULY 1605

“They till and cultivate the land, a practice we had not seen previously... We saw their grain, which is Indian corn. We saw there many squashes, pumpkins, and tobacco, which they likewise cultivate. ... The fixed abodes, the cultivated fields, and the fine trees led us to the conclusion that the climate here is more temperate and better than that where we wintered.”

Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

JAMESTOWN, QUÉBEC, SANTA FE: THREE NORTH AMERICAN BEGINNINGS

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/jamestown-quebec-santafe/en/new-societies>

NEW SOCIETIES

The newcomers intended to create societies similar to those in Europe, but their New World settlements all became hybrids, combining the familiar with the new. The presence of indigenous peoples, a concentration on producing goods for export, and limited Old World immigration shaped the settlements in ways that no one had foreseen.



JAMESTOWN

Leading men promoted an English ideal for Virginia society. They hoped to establish a ruling class of wealthy families, with landed estates worked by bound laborers. Yet indigenous Americans had no desire to work as peasants for Englishmen, and poor Englishmen would only immigrate as servants when promised a chance to obtain some land of their own. As available land dwindled, conflict exploded in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, when landless rebels attacked both the government at Jamestown and Native groups. Conflict between rich and poor Englishmen lessened as Virginians turned to exploiting the labor of Africans.



The Burning of Jamestown during Bacon's Rebellion of 1676. Painting by Howard Pyle, 1905.



QUÉBEC

Leading men promoted a French ideal for Québec society. They imagined a hierarchical and religiously orthodox settlement, with merchant companies to control the fur trade, a ruling class owning large landed estates, and peasants and craftsmen to work on them. Limited immigration from France and gender imbalance prevented the full success of these ideas. One visionary plan to solve the problem was to incorporate Huron, Algonkin, and Montagnais converts to Christianity into French culture and society. Champlain told the Huron, "Our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall become one people."

This child's commode chair reminds us that there were complete families in early New France. The fur monopolies that ran the colony worried that immigration would introduce competitors and expanding settlements would drive away fur-bearing animals. After 1663, royal authorities introduced policies to increase the population. They recruited hundreds of French "filles du Roy" (king's girls) to become wives in New France.

—Canadian Museum of Civilization



SANTA FE

While the English excluded the Powhatans from their society, and the French considered incorporating the Huron into theirs, Spanish settlers in New Mexico lived amidst a Pueblo population that far outnumbered them and was essential to their society. Spanish settlers, Native servants from Mexico, and Pueblo peoples negotiated complex relationships and exchanged aspects of their cultures. Among themselves, Pueblo peoples found a common situation in their subjection to the newcomers and a common language in Spanish.



Cats played a role in European households and European mythology, but they were new to Pueblo peoples. Indigenous potters added ceramic cats and mice to their repertoire of animal forms in order to appeal to the Spanish consumer, as in this example made at Pecos in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

—Museum Excavation LA 625, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico, Department of Cultural Affairs

Champlain Among the Mohawk, 1609

D'ISLE, GUILLAUME. L'AMERIQUE SPENTRIONALE 1700

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/exhibits/Septentrionalis.html>



This map of North America by Guillaume de L'Isle presents a French view of the continent about 1700. The Great Lakes are well defined with French forts noted. The English settlements are confined east of the Alleghenies, and the Spanish forts are clustered around Santa Fe. The Mississippi River valley is well developed with recent French settlements. It confines English and Spanish colonies to small strips on either side of the continent. Yet the French remained a tiny minority, even in that part of the continent claimed as New France.

Publisher: Guillaume D'Isle, L'Amerique Septentrionale 1700.