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8.8 Describe the location and reasons for French exploration and settlements in North America, including the Huguenots.

**New France**

(PICTURED ABOVE: French explorer Champlain had visited and mapped the New England coast a number of times before the Pilgrims arrived in 1620. This map of New France was drawn in 1612 and includes all of what is now New England.)
About the same time John Smith and the Jamestown settlers were setting up camp in Virginia, France was building permanent settlements of their own. In 1534, the French king - Francis I, sent Jacques Cartier to look for the "Northwest Passage" that could link the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. Cartier did find the inlet to the St. Lawrence River and claimed the whole area for France and gave this land the new title of New France. His explorations led to the interest in fur trading for the French.
SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN led a group of French colonists through the mouth of the ST. LAWRENCE RIVER to first establish a settlement on the present day site of Montreal. Champlain established QUEBEC in 1608 and that began the French empire in North America. The fur trade led fortune seekers deeper and deeper into North America.

Champlain in America - Founding Quebec

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAFd2wu19-w
French Jesuit missionaries boldly penetrated the wilderness in the hopes of converting Native Americans to Catholicism. By 1700, France had laid claim to an expanse of territory that ranged from NEWFOUNDLAND in the Northeast, down across the GREAT LAKES through the OHIO VALLEY, southward along the MISSISSIPPI RIVER to the GULF OF MEXICO, and as far west as the ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

The French Explorers: La Salle, Marquette and Joliet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7_yTnRNe9Y

The central region of North America was watered by the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. These rivers valleys were explored by Robert de La Salle in 1669 and four years later was explored by a trader - Louis Joliet and a Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette. These two made their way around Lake Michigan and to Wisconsin to travel down the Mississippi River. They traveled down the Mississippi River to the point where the Arkansas River emptied into the Mississippi River. They, as others before them, were looking for the Northwest Passage and believed that this river would not empty into the Pacific Ocean. They turned their canoes around and returned to Lake Michigan.
La Salle was inspired by their findings and was determined to reach the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was a difficult journey for La Salle, but in 1682 he reached the mouth of the Mississippi River and claimed the entire Mississippi Valley region for France. He named this region Louisiana - in honor of the French Monarch, Louis XIV.
New Orleans was settled in 1718 and this region was hotly disputed between the French and English during the 18th century.

There were profound differences between New England and NEW FRANCE. The English colonies, though much smaller in area, dwarfed the French colonization in population. Louis XIV was a devout Catholic and tolerated no other faiths within the French Empire. French HUGUENOTS, the dominant religious minority, therefore found no haven in New France. Huguenots were French Protestants who fled France because of religious persecution. Some found refuge in countries in Europe–Germany, New Netherlands and England. Many Huguenots migrated to the British colonies—the Carolinas, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York. Huguenots were very talented artisans, which sometimes caused them to be welcomed into the countries to which they fled. Land was less of an issue in France than England, so French peasants had less economic incentive to leave. The French Crown was far more interested in its holdings in the Far East and the sugar islands of the Caribbean, so the French monarchs did little to sponsor emigration to North America. Eventually, the sparse French population would be no match for the more numerous British colonists as the wars raged on.
A Huguenot is a member of a French Protestant group descended from 16th and 17th century Protestant Reformed Church of France. Huguenot numbers peaked near an estimated two million by 1562, concentrated mainly in the southern and central parts of France, about one-eighth the number of French Catholics. As Huguenots gained influence and more openly displayed their faith, Catholic hostility grew, in spite of increasingly liberal political concessions and edicts of toleration from the French crown, most notably the Edict of Nantes.

A series of religious persecutions followed, culminating in the Edict of Fontainebleau revoking the Edict of Nantes and pressuring Huguenots to convert. While nearly three-quarters eventually submitted, roughly 500,000 Huguenots fled France by the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

The bulk of Huguenot emigres relocated to Protestant European nations such as England, Wales, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, the Dutch Republic, the Electorate of Brandenburg and Electorate of the Palatinate in the Holy Roman Empire, the Duchy of Prussia, the Channel Islands, and Ireland. They also spread beyond the Old World to the Dutch Cape Colony in South Africa, the Dutch East Indies, the Caribbean, and several of the English colonies of North America, where they were accepted and allowed to worship freely.

Unlike the English colonies where self-rule had been pursued immediately, the people of New France had no such privileges. There were no elected assemblies. Decisions were made by local magistrates on behalf of the French king. Trial by jury did not exist, nor did a free press. The French citizenry depended directly on the Crown for guidance. The English colonists depended on themselves. In the end, despite huge claims to North American lands, the French would be overwhelmed by more numerous, self-directed subjects of Britain.

French cultural contributions are still felt in the modern United States. CAJUN and CREOLE food draw from French culinary traditions. We need look no further than the map: DES MOINES, DETROIT, ST. LOUIS, GRAND TETON, and NEW ORLEANS, to see but some of France’s enduring influence.

Archaeology — The Early Acadian Period Nova Scotia was first settled by the French in 1605 and was home to 10,000 colonists by the time of the French and Indian War. Archaeological excavation at Belleisle reveals much about French colonial life before British expulsion of the Acadians. French Colonies in AmericaFrom Mississippi to Nova Scotia, information on seven French colonial settlements, with many pictures of archaeological investigations and the reconstruction of the sites. La Nouvelle France A site devoted to the history of French colonization of North America. Maps, art, and primary documents support the French text. You don’t know French? Visit anyway — you’ll be surprised how much you will understand! On the French Frontier 1700-1800 From the Illinois State Museum, a look at French colonial life in the 1700s. Six vignettes explore different social issues, and in-depth
activities and additional resources (maps, timeline, material culture, and ethnic relations) make this site interesting and valuable. **Saint-Pierre et Miquelon** New France exists today in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, two small islands off the coast of Newfoundland, which are still French possessions. This colorfully illustrated site offers information on history, culture, tourism and much more. Some gems hidden here, but you must dig them out. **The Virtual Museum of New France** This site, with voluminous articles on French exploration of the new world and colonial culture, including maps, timelines, art, and original source material, is seemingly inexhaustible. And it is one of the most beautiful sites on the Internet. Acadians in Canada weren’t permitted to use guns or canoes by the British authorities in Halifax. On Friday, September 5, 1755, Colonel John Winslow ordered that all males aged 10 years and up in the area were to gather in the Grand-Pré Church for an important message from His Excellency. Promises were made, promises broken. Acadians were placed on ships, destination unknown, and their homes were destroyed. **Learn More...**

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**French Settlements in Canada**

The French entered into Canada with the intent of using the easy access to the large number of fish.

- As the demand for fur increased, French settlers found that Canada offered ample opportunities to trap beavers. Thus, French trappers throughout Canada became the center of the short-lived fur trade.
- While the colonial government attempted to maintain a monopoly over fur trapping, French trappers mostly engaged in small-scale trapping not connected with the colonial center.
- As a result, French trappers relied on nearby Native Americans for support in the harsh, Canadian wilderness.
As a result of this cooperation, European goods such as iron tools, guns, and cloth began to enter Native American trading circles. Compared to the English and the Spanish, French relations with Native Americans was mostly positive and mutually beneficial.

French settlers were able to establish themselves and they named the area New France.

- It was an enormous amount of land at its peak. In Canada, they had created colonies throughout Quebec, Montreal and the rest of central and eastern Canada along with several territories in the U.S.
- They went into Louisiana and some areas of New York. The French colonies ended after their defeat in the Seven Years War. Their influence, however, has remained in the areas they once controlled.

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