

Find Out

- 1 Why did the French come to America?
- 2 How did Native Americans help the French?
- 3 How did France lose most of its land in America?

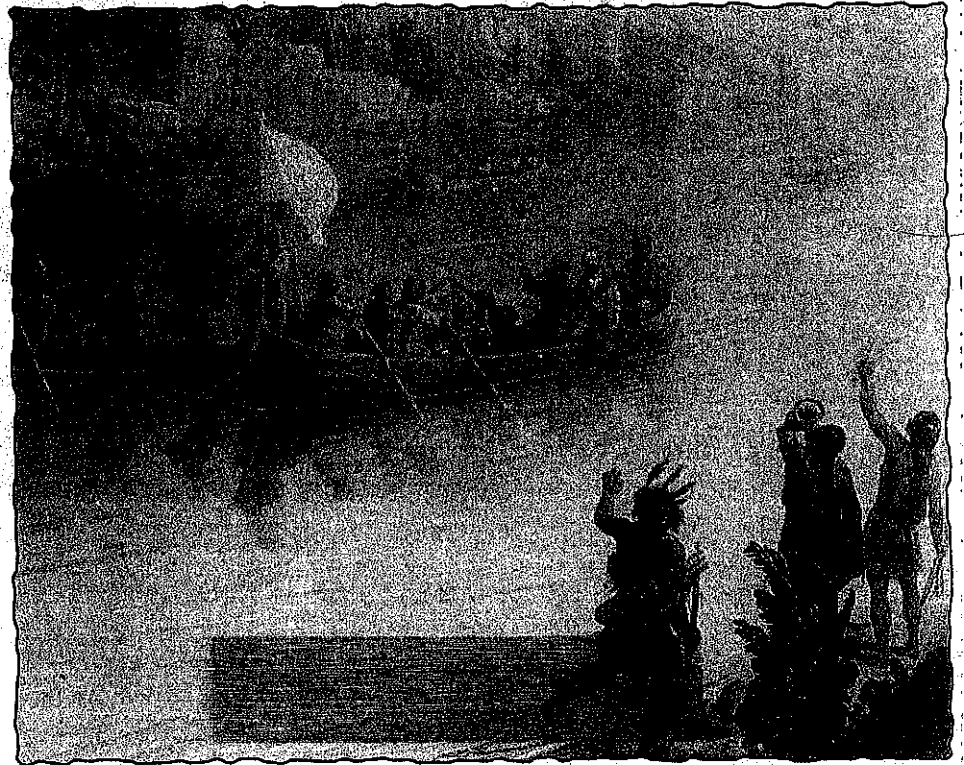
NEW WORDS

shortcut
body of water
snowshoes

PEOPLE & PLACES

France
French
King Louis
Jacques Cartier
Canada
St. Lawrence River
New France
René Robert Sieur de la Salle
Gulf of Mexico
Louisiana
St. Louis
New Orleans
George Washington
North America

The French Come to America



➤ **Learning from Pictures** Who greeted these French explorers as they traveled along the St. Lawrence River?

Many English people came to America for freedom of religion. Many poor people came to America to earn money. We learned that many Spanish people came to America to find gold. People from France also came to America. People from France are called the French.

King Francis I of France wanted to find a **shortcut** to Asia. In 1534 the king sent Jacques Cartier to America. Cartier wanted to find a river in America that he could follow west all the way to Asia. Cartier sailed to Canada. He could not find a river that went to Asia. He explored the St. Lawrence River. Look at the map on page 33. Find the St. Lawrence River. Cartier said that all the land around the St. Lawrence River belonged to France. French land in America was called New France.

La Salle called the land around the Mississippi River "Louisiana." ➤



René Robert Sieur
de la Salle



PRIMARY SOURCE

"On either hand were vast [huge] prairies . . . hills covered with vines, fruit trees . . . and tall forest trees. . . ."

—*Father Hennepin*, who traveled with La Salle



Jacques Cartier

René Robert Sieur de la Salle also explored America for France. In 1682 La Salle traveled from the St. Lawrence River to the Mississippi River. Then he paddled a canoe down the Mississippi River to the south. In the south there is a **body of water** called the Gulf of Mexico. La Salle was the first person we know of who traveled all the way down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico.

René Robert Sieur de la Salle called the land near the Mississippi River "Louisiana." He put a big cross and a French flag on the land of Louisiana. La Salle said that Louisiana belonged to King Louis of France. The land around the Mississippi River and the land around the St. Lawrence River were part of New France.

The French started two cities on the Mississippi River. These two French cities were St. Louis and New Orleans. New Orleans was near the Gulf of Mexico.

Some French people moved to America. They came for two reasons. One reason was to get furs. Native Americans hunted animals for their furs. The French traded with the Native Americans for these furs. In France they sold these furs for a lot of money. The second reason the French came to America was to teach Native Americans how to be Catholics.

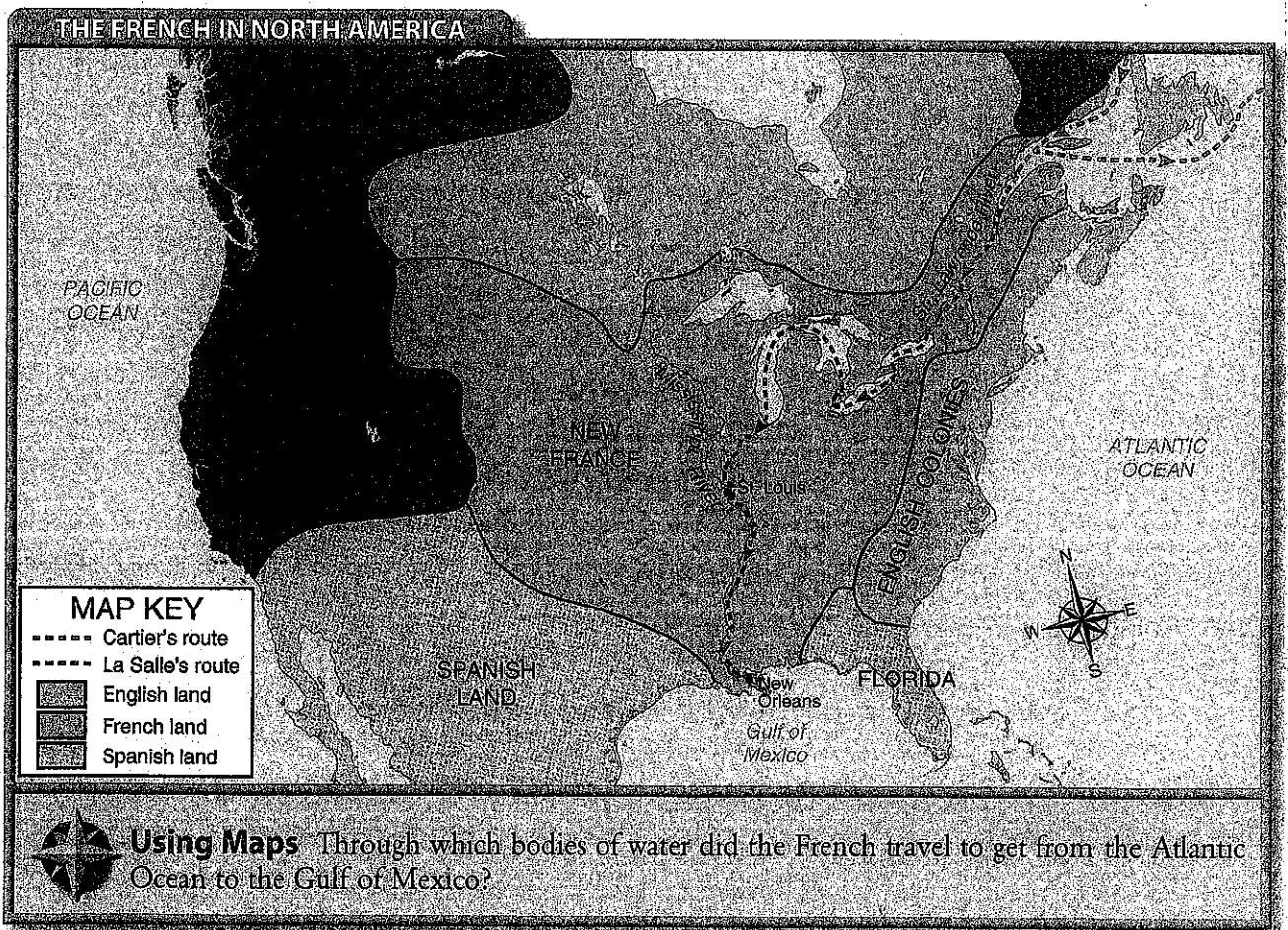
The French owned much more land in America than the English owned. But there were many more English settlers than French settlers. Few French people wanted to live in America. The French did not allow freedom of religion. Only Catholics could live in New France. So the French colony grew very slowly.

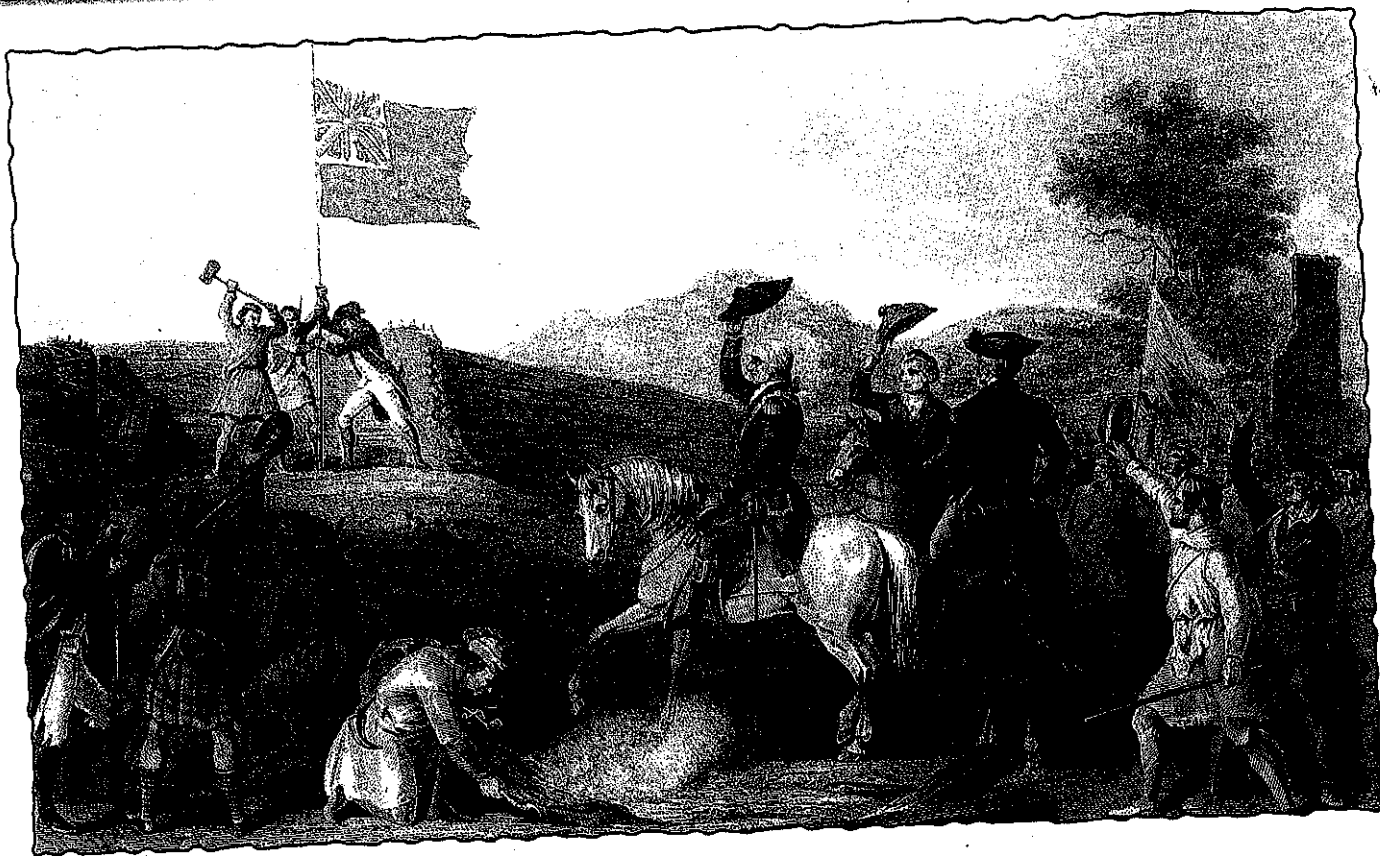
Native Americans helped the French in many ways. They taught the French how to trap animals for furs. They taught the French how to use canoes to travel on rivers. They also showed the French how to make **snowshoes**. Many parts of New France had lots of snow in the winter. When the French wore snowshoes, they could walk on very deep snow.

Native Americans had fewer fights with the French than with the Spanish or the English. The Spanish had forced Native Americans to work as slaves. The French never treated them as slaves. The English took land away from Native Americans in order to build farms and towns. The French did not take Native American lands.



French fur trapper wearing snowshoes





▲ In 1763 France lost most of its land in America when England won the French and Indian War.

England did not want France to own land in America. Many English people in the 13 colonies wanted to move west to Louisiana. France did not want English people to live in Louisiana. England and France had been enemies in Europe for many years. They became enemies in America. By 1754 England and France were fighting a war in America. This war was called the French and Indian War. Some Native Americans fought for the French, and some fought for the English. George Washington lived in the Virginia colony. He helped the English soldiers fight.

The French and the English also fought in Europe. In 1756 they began fighting in Europe. England won this war in 1763.

England also won the French and Indian War. This war ended in 1763. After the war, England owned Canada. England owned all the land that was east of the Mississippi River. Spain owned the land that was west of the Mississippi River. St. Louis and New Orleans belonged to Spain. France lost most of its land in North America. France kept two small islands in Canada and the Caribbean. In 1763 England and Spain owned most of the land in North America.