

The Arctic Coast 1602 to 1606

Abstract

In the early seventeenth century, there were two voyages that explored the Labrador coastline and southern Baffin Island. These voyages were by Waymouth (1602) and Knight (1606). The map also shows the extent of territory known to Europeans in the period 1497 to 1650; and the navigation of all exploration routes during the period of the penetration of the Eastern Great Lakes and Hudson Bay from 1600 to 1650. The historical names found on the map are derived from contemporaneous maps and written documents of the period.

The trends that were to lead to the systematic exploration of Canada during the seventeenth century were beginning to be evident late in the sixteenth century. The fur trade had proven to be profitable. In addition the French court had increasingly come to the realization that no lasting benefit could be gained without the establishment of permanent bases for further operations.

In 1599 Henri IV, King of France gave Pierre Chauvin de Tonnetuit, a Huguenot from Dieppe, a trading monopoly for all of New France and orders to "live in the country and build a stronghold". This directive led to the establishment of a trading post at Tadoussac in 1600. In 1603 Chauvin died and was briefly succeeded by Aymar de Chaste. An expedition further up the St. Lawrence River organized by him led to the first geographical survey of the area since Jacques Cartier's visit. This survey was carried out by Samuel de Champlain. In 1604, attention shifted to Acadia under Pierre du Gua Monts, so Champlain undertook a survey of its coast with orders to search for minerals and potential harbours. After a disastrous winter (1604-05) on an island in the Ste Croix River (on the present-day Maine-New Brunswick border), a permanent settlement was built at Port Royal in the Annapolis Valley.

Du Monts attention reverted to the St. Lawrence River in 1608. Champlain was placed in charge by de Monts with orders to establish a base. This decision led to the founding of Québec City. In order to secure the fur trade, the colony and engage in further exploration, de Monts and Champlain were persuaded by local Algonquins and Montagnais to join their alliance with the Huron against the Iroquois tribes south of Lake Ontario. This decision, although unavoidable, led to French-Iroquois hostilities that were to plague New France until the English conquest (1760).

Meanwhile, English exploration came to a temporary halt in 1588 with Spain's war against England. English interest in a northwest passage was rekindled with the founding of the East India Company in 1600, which sponsored the expeditions of Waymouth (1602) and Knight (1606). Neither expedition found a passage west but Waymouth held out hope for an "inlet" at about 61° 40' N latitude which he had not been able to penetrate due to ice and strong currents.

Voyages of Exploration

An audio description for each voyage of exploration shown on this map can be accessed from the folder "audio". The voyages of exploration described are:

- 1602 George Waymouth (English; for East Indian Company)
- 1606 John Knight (English; for East Indian Company)

The descriptions of the voyages of exploration are based on research by C.E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University. An audio version of each description can be played as the user follows the exploration route made by the explorer on the map.

Map Sources

Exploration 1497 to 1650

Natural Resources Canada. 1991. Canada-Exploration 1497 to 1650 [map]. Fifth Edition, National Atlas of Canada.

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Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

Canadian Museum of Civilization. History. Inuit and Englishmen: The Nunavut Voyages of Martin Frobisher

<http://www.civilization.ca/hist/frobisher/frint01e.html>

A Canadian Museum and Civilization virtual museum Web site that explores Martin Frobisher's exploration of the Arctic.

Canadian Museum of Civilization. Virtual Museum of New France

<http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/explore/virtual-museum-of-new-france>

The Virtual Museum of New France (VMNF) sponsored by the Canadian Museum of Civilization has information of that period of history in which the French explored North America and founded there the colony of New France.

Government of Canada. Canada's Digital Collections. Canadian Arctic Profiles. Exploration of the Northwest Passage

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/arctic/explore/intro.htm>

This Web site provides information on a variety of topics relating to the Canadian Arctic and includes information on exploration in the Arctic.

Library and Archives Canada. Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online

<http://www.biographi.ca/index.html>

The History Makers: Exploration

<http://www.nfb.ca/FMT/E/seri/H/TheHistoMakerExplo.html>

A listing of all the available National Film Board presentations on Canada's well-known explorers, including Samuel de Champlain and John Cabot. Many of the films may be available from local libraries or obtained via inter-library loan.

Provincial/Territorial Government

Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web site. Exploration and Settlement

<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/default.html>

The history of exploration in Newfoundland and the Labrador coast through the centuries.

Other

Canadian Heritage Gallery

<http://www.canadianheritage.com/index2.htm>

The Canadian Heritage Gallery is a very extensive collection of historical Canadiana on the Internet.

Discovers Web Page

<http://www.win.tue.nl/~engels/discovery/index.html#nwcoast>

This site has hundreds of related exploration links, including many links to Canadian explorers. (Web site author: Andre Engels)

Great Canadian Explorers

http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/english/about/multimedia/explorers/index.html

Information on several great Canadian explorers, including John Cabot, Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain, Henry Kelsey, James Knight and La Vérendrye. (Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick)

Historical Atlas of Canada Online Learning Project

<http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/>

This site is still under development but promises to be an excellent site for historical maps of Canada. All maps shown on the site have been adapted from the printed version of three-volume Historical Atlas of Canada.

The Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM)

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/cihm/>

The Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) was established in 1978 to locate early printed Canadian materials (books, annuals, and periodicals), to preserve their content on microfilm, and make the resulting Early Canadian Research Collection available to libraries and archives in Canada and abroad.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html>

The HBCA offers a wealth of information on the human and natural history of western and northern Canada and the western USA. Whether you are an historian, genealogist, ethnologist, environmental scientist or land claims researcher, the HBCA may be able to help.