

The Great Lakes 1654 to 1670

Abstract

In the period between 1654 and 1670, missionaries were the principal explorers in the Great Lakes area. This map shows expeditions covering all parts of the Great Lakes except for southern Lake Michigan. The six expeditions shown are: Des Groseilliers (1654 to 1656), Des Groseilliers and Radisson (1659 to 1660); Allouez (1665 to 1667 and 1669); Peré and Adrien Jolliet (1669); and Adrien Jolliet, Dollier and Galinée (1669 to 1670). The map also shows the extent of territory known to Europeans and the navigation of all exploration routes in the period 1651 to 1670. The historical names found on the map are derived from contemporaneous maps and written documents of the period.

A peace between the French and the western Iroquois in 1654 (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga and Oneida) again opened the interior of New France to exploration. While the Jesuits explored the upper St. Lawrence River and the surrounding Iroquois country (lower Great Lakes area) in the pursuit of their missionary work, Médard des Groseilliers travelled west to Green Bay on Lake Michigan with some Ottawa and Huron-Petun to promote the renewal of the fur trade. The collapse of the Iroquoian mission in 1658, and the return of Des Groseilliers from a second voyage in 1660, directed Jesuit efforts to the upper Great Lakes where Des Groseilliers and Radisson had reported large concentrations of Aboriginal peoples. In an attempt to establish a mission on the shore of Lake Superior, Father Allouez successfully explored and mapped Lake Superior from Sault Ste. Marie to Lake Nipigon (1665 to 1667). In 1669 he mapped northern Lake Michigan through Green Bay and then west up Fox River into present-day Wisconsin.



Figure 1: Radisson and Des Groseilliers at Charles Fort, Hudson Bay

Source: Public Archives of Manitoba

Following another French-Iroquois peace in 1666, the lower Great Lakes were thoroughly explored and mapped by Dollier and Galinée. Their orders had been to find a route to the Mississippi to begin missionary work among the Potawatomie, but these had been curtailed when the party lost its supplies on Lake Erie. The route explored by Dollier and Galinée had been traversed earlier the same year by Adrien Jolliet, returning from mining exploration with Jean Peré on the shores of Lake Superior.

The Saguenay system to Lac Saint-Jean had been explored by the Jesuits in 1647. By 1663, missionaries and traders' agents had pushed exploration to Lac Némiscou on the Rivière Rupert. Other missionaries, accompanied by traders' agents explored the Rivière Saint-Maurice and the Manicouagan rivers in the hope of instructing bands of the Montagnais. Similarly, the Péribonka and Shipshaw rivers north of present-day Chicoutimi were travelled by Jesuits but their routes are not known.

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:

- 1654 to 1656 Médard Chouart des Groseilliers (French)
- 1659 to 1660 Médard Chouart des Groseilliers and Pierre-Esprit Radisson (French)
- 1665 to 1667 Claude Allouez (French)
- 1669 Claude Allouez (French)
- 1669 Jean Peré and Adrien Jolliet (French)
- 1669 to 1670 Adrien Jolliet, François Dollier and René de Bréhant de Gallinée (French)

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 1651 to 1760

Natural Resources Canada. 1991. Canada-Exploration 1651 to 1760 [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.

Claude Allouez

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01326b.htm>

Brief biography of Claude Allouez from the online Catholic Encyclopaedia. (New Advent Web site)

Discovers Web Page

<http://www.win.tue.nl/%7Eengels/discovery/index.html#nwcoast>

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

François Dollier

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03407a.htm>

Brief biography of François Dollier from the online Catholic Encyclopaedia. (New Advent Web site)

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.