

New France circa 1740

Abstract

Depicted on this map is the extent of New France at its territorial height circa 1740 prior to its great territorial losses to British North America. Also shown on the map are the territorial claims, administrative divisions, and the distribution of population and settlement (including fur trading posts) circa 1740. This map along with British North America circa 1823 shows the settlement and population in Canada for two important periods in Canadian history prior to Confederation.

NEW FRANCE circa 1740 represents the geographic extent of New France at its height prior to its great territorial losses to British North America. The geo-political boundaries of New France in relation to British North America are explored and discussed in relation to: Territorial Claims, Internal Divisions, European Settlement, and European Population.

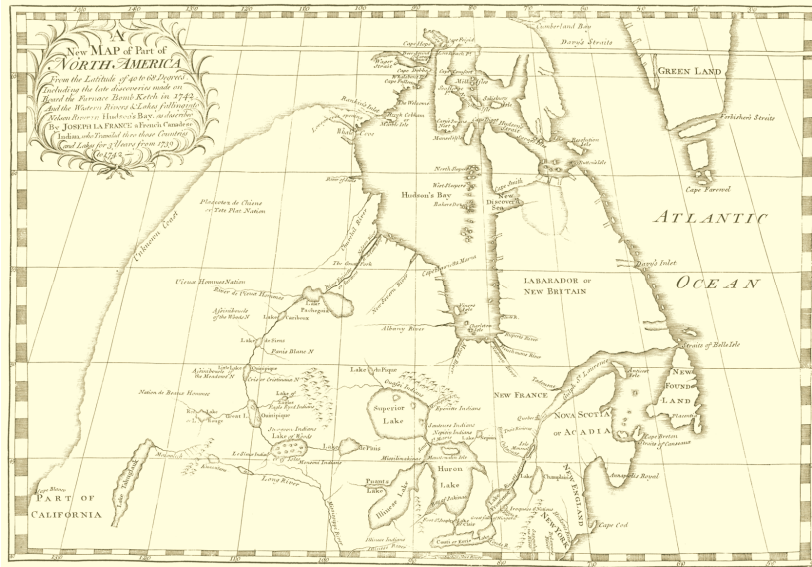


Jacques Cartier, claiming Canada for France at Gaspé in 1534, in a Montreal newspaper rendition done in 1908.

Source: Canadian Heritage Gallery, Government of Canada.

Territorial Claims

French and English territorial claims in North America circa 1740 were based on different interpretations of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) as well as on prior discoveries, native alliances and on land grants issued from time to time by their respective sovereigns. Interior boundaries were not settled by the Treaty but were supposed to be negotiated by a commission in 1714.



Historical Map: 1744 A New Map of Part of North America (Arthur Dobbs and Joseph La France)

Source: The Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

This commission met in 1714 but was unable to come to any agreement. The Treaty had given the "...bay and straits of Hudson, together with all lands, seas, sea coasts, rivers and places situated in the said bay..." to Britain. The point of debate was how far into the interior these bounds should go. In 1714, on the urging of the Hudson's Bay Company, Britain suggested a boundary that ran from Grimmington Island (Lat. 57° 51' N) on the Labrador coast, through the centre of Lake Mistassin to the 40th parallel stretching indefinitely to the west. This was rejected by France.

On the maps of the period, France conceded to Britain roughly the Hudson Bay lowlands. France recognized as British Territory all the lands lying within the Atlantic watershed of the Kennebec River.

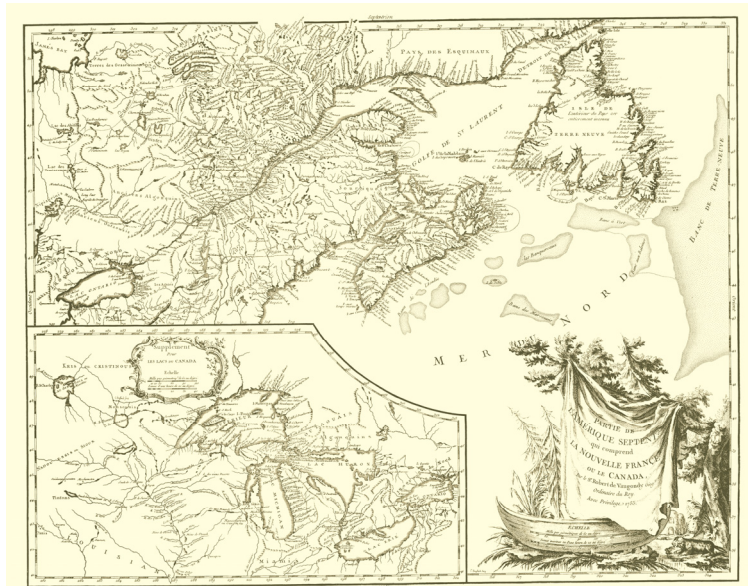
The Treaty assigned Newfoundland and its offshore islands to Britain. France retained fishing and landing rights (but not the right to establish settlements), along the north shore between Pointe Riche and Cape Bonavista. All islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were assigned to France.

On the mainland, the Treaty assigned to Britain "... all of Nova Scotia (or Acadia), with its ancient boundaries..." as well as territorial waters from "...the coast of Nova Scotia to east within 30 leagues beginning from the island commonly called Cape Sable Island inclusively, stretching along toward the Southwest".

Internal Divisions

The settled parts of New France were divided into five gouvernements or administrative districts (Québec, Trois-Rivières, Montréal, Île Saint-Jean (present day Prince Edward Island), Île-Royale (now Cape Breton Island)), each with a governor, intendant (civil administrator) and other government, judicial and ecclesiastical functionaries. The governor of Québec was also governor-general of Canada and as such representative of the king in New France. Officially, all the gouvernements came under the authority of the governor-general and the intendant at Québec.

Of the settled areas, Acadia-Nova Scotia was in an anomalous position. It was almost exclusively occupied by people of French origin but because of the vague wording of the Treaty of Utrecht both the British governor from Annapolis Royal and the governor from the Île Royale attempted to exert influence and control over the population; neither of them successfully.



Historical Map - Partie de l'Amérique Septentrionale qui comprend La Nouvelle France ou le Canada (Gilles Robert de Vaugondy)

Source: The Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

European Settlement



Historical Map - 1755 Carte de l'Amérique Septentrionale (Jacques-Nicolas Bellin)

Source: The Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

St. Lawrence Valley

In 1740, the population of the St. Lawrence Valley stood at about 44 000, of which 18 000 lived in the gouvernement of Québec, 4000 in the gouvernement of Trois-Rivières and 22 000 in the gouvernement of Montréal. The major towns within that area were Québec (4600), Trois-Rivières (378) and Montréal (4200). Île Royale had a permanent population of about 4000, of whom 1500 lived in Louisbourg, while Île Saint-Jean, where colonization was just beginning, had a population of about 500. Both areas attracted a transient population of fishermen who would swell their population by about twenty-five percent during the summer months.

The Acadian population was about 8000, living in several clusters of agricultural settlements. There were no major towns, the largest being the British fort at Annapolis Royal with a garrison of just over 100 men, a few merchants and administrators.

Interior West of Montréal

The interior west of Montréal (Pays d'en haut) was regarded as Aboriginal territory. Trade at specific posts was granted for specified periods either in the form of

monopolies or licences (congés) by the governor general and the intendant at Québec. Commandants were appointed to each district directly responsible to the governor general. The strategic Lake Ontario forts were under direct control of agents of the crown. In summer, the resident population of the Pays d'en haut, composed of soldiers (approx. 250), traders (approx. 150) and settlers, mainly at Détroit (approx. 120), was increased by about 350 traders and voyagers, largely from the Montréal area.

Domaine du Roi

The Domaine du Roi stretched from Les Éboulements to Baie de Moise stretching along the north shore of the St. Lawrence. The trading and fishing concessions within it were leased from the crown for specified periods at a set rate. The permanent European population of the area may have been 150, doubling during the fishing and sealing season.

In the eastern part of the Domaine du Roi, the rugged coast of the Côte du Nord was subdivided into a series of trading, fishing and sealing concessions, which were leased from the crown. The main concentration of settlement was in the southern reaches of the Strait of Belle Isle. It is probable that the permanent population of the area was under 300 people but increased to perhaps 1500 during the fishing season.

Fishing concessions were also leased along the Gaspé coast, except between Cap d'Espoir and Cap des Rosiers which was free. The population of the Gaspé may have been 500, doubling during the fishing season.

Rupert's Land

Rupert's Land was governed by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London. The area was divided into five districts each containing one post whose affairs were run by a chief factor who met regularly in council presided over by a local governor to discuss and implement orders from London. The permanent population of the five posts was probably less than 100, consisting of traders, skilled artisans to keep the post in order and repair trade goods, and labourers.

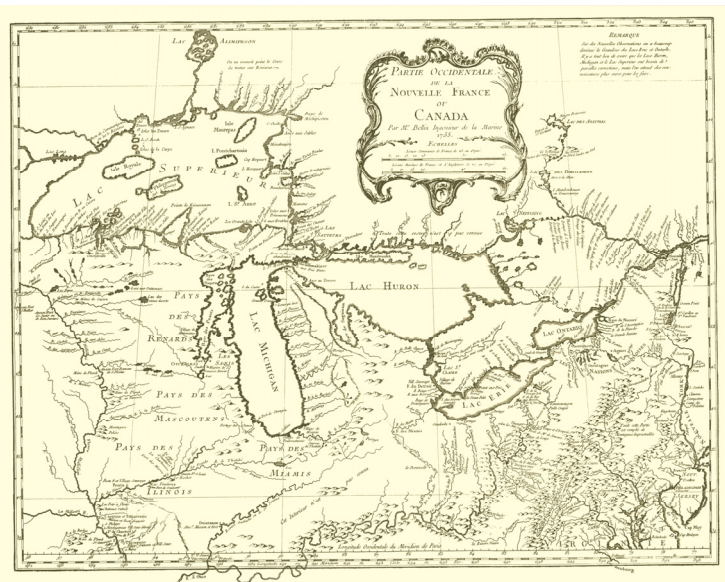
Newfoundland

Both Rupert's Land and Newfoundland were regarded as areas for resource exploitation where settlement was not to be encouraged. Nevertheless, by the 1740s Newfoundland had a permanent population of some 4000, which rose to 6000 during the fishing season. Of the many small ports along the east coast, St. John's was the largest with about 800 people. Administration was by a governor responsible to the British Board of Trade. Since the governor was also the commander of the Royal

Navy, the escort that protected the fishing fleet, he was only present in the summer months.

European Population

The British colonies along the Atlantic coast north of Virginia had a population of about 623 000, while the area now occupied by Canada had a permanent European population of about 62 000 of which 58 000 lived in New France and Acadia.



Historical Map: 1755 Partie Occidentale de la Nouvelle France ou du Canada (Jacques-Nicolas Bellin)

Source: The Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

Both Britain and France had densely settled core areas within the territories they claimed, governed by effective administrations, and vast peripheral areas slated for the commercial exploitation by a largely non-resident population for the benefit of the home country.

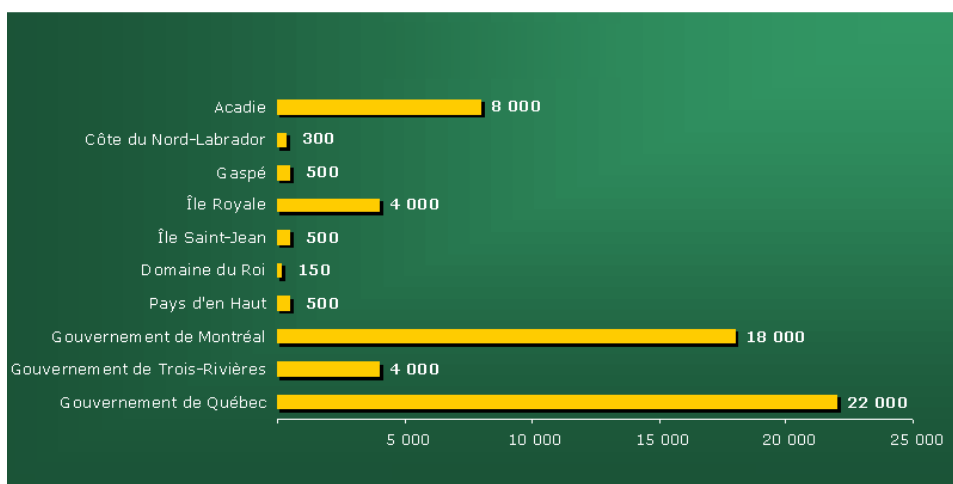


Figure 1: Population of New France circa 1740 (by region)

Source: European and Aboriginal population estimates are based on research by Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University.

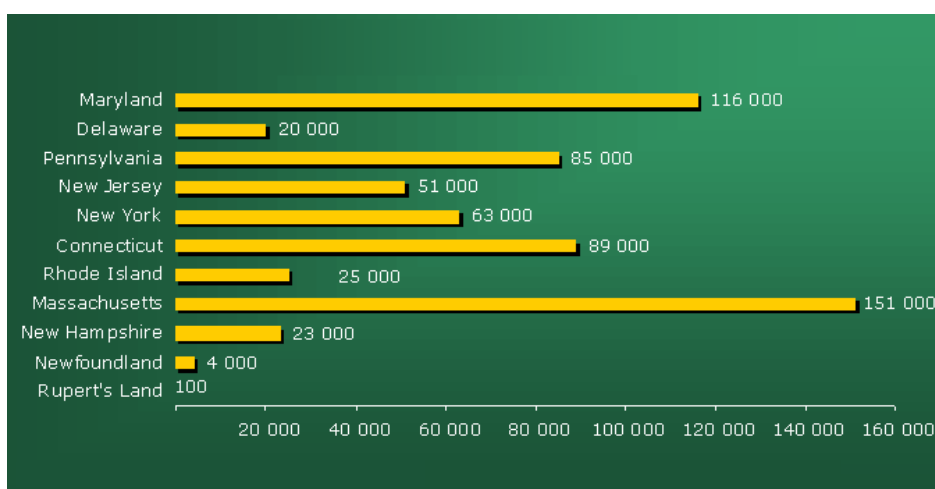


Figure 2: Population of British North America 1740 (by region)

Source: European and Aboriginal population estimates are based on research by Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University.

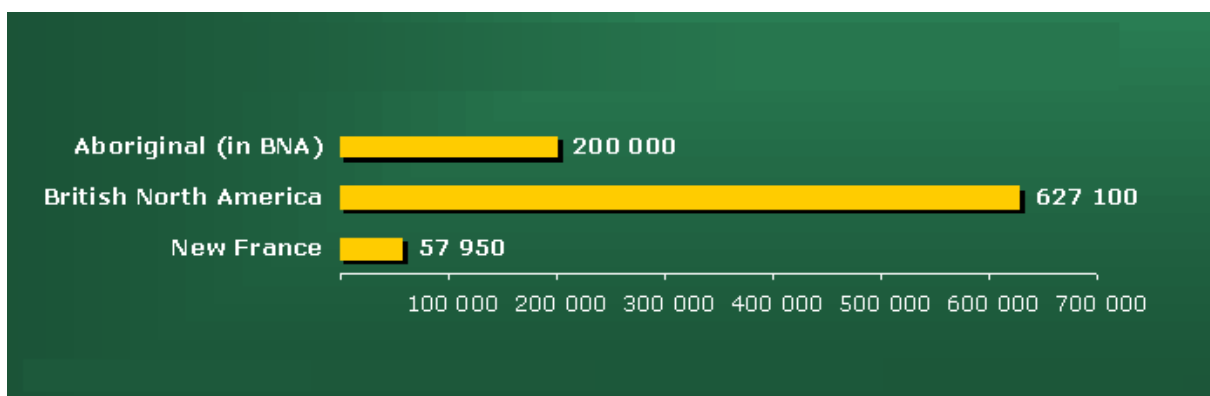


Figure 3: Estimated Population in British North America and New France circa 1740

Source: European and Aboriginal population estimates are based on research by Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University.

Map Sources

Historical Boundaries circa 1740

The boundaries represent the extent of international territorial claims in North America circa 1740 made by the British and French. The territorial claim boundaries are based on the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. The treaty did not specify definite boundaries, and though a commission was held to negotiate these boundaries, the territorial claims could not be reconciled, until the 1764 Treaty of Paris. Known internal divisions are also mapped, based on the historical interpretation of primary documents and maps. Much of the interior of North America was unknown to Europeans at this time, therefore most of the internal division boundaries are not enclosed. Research: Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

Populated Settlements circa 1740

The population and distribution of settlement in New France and British North America circa 1740. Research: Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

Recognition of Territorial Claims circa 1740

The approximate areal extent of territory claimed and recognized by the French and English circa 1740. All other areas outside these areas were areas of dispute, where neither the English nor the French recognised the territorial claims of the other power. Research: Conrad E. Heidenreich, Department of Geography, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

References

- Canada. Department of Agriculture. 1876. Census of Canada 1871. Vol. 4. Ottawa.
- Clark, A.H. 1968. Acadia, The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Harris, R.C. 1966. The Seignorial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Harvey, D.C. 1926. The French Regime in Prince Edward Island. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Head, C.G. 1976. Eighteenth Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Lounsbury, R.G. 1934. The British Fishery at Newfoundland, 1634-1763. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Morton, A.S. 1973. A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71. 2nd ed., L.G. Thomas. ed. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- United States, Bureau of the Census. 1960. Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957. Washington, D.C., United States.

Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

- 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. The Acadian Odyssey: History of Acadia
<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/acadian/intro/intro.htm>
The history of Acadia and the Acadian Experience in Canada
- Library and Archives Canada. Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online
<http://www.biographi.ca/index.html>

Other

Canada: A Celebration of our Heritage

<http://www.canadianheritage.com/books/canada.htm>

From the Heritage Gallery Online Books, read Chapters 2 to 6 for further information on Canada's history in the period 1740 to 1823.

Gouvernement de la France. Ministère de la culture et de la communication. La Nouvelle France (available only in French)

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/nllefce/fr/>

The history of New France. The site is sponsored by the Government of France.

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.canadiana.org/marc/>

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.

Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA)

<http://www.acmla.org/>

ACMLA actively serves as the representative professional group for Canadian map librarians, cartographic archivists and others interested in geographic information in all formats.