

Section Two

The French Occupation

Daily Warm –up – Which European country permanently settled the colony of Louisiana?

Terms to Know

<i>Jean Ribault</i>	<i>Rene de Laudonnière</i>	<i>Charlesfort</i>
<i>St. Augustine</i>	<i>René- Robert Cavalier de La Salle</i>	<i>Gulf of Mexico</i>
<i>Mississippi River</i>	<i>Mobile</i>	<i>New Orleans</i>
<i>Louisiana</i>	<i>Fur trade</i>	

Reading Skills Break

Based upon the context of its use in the sentence above, which of the following best explains the meaning of the word acknowledge?

- A.) To admit
- B.) To deny
- C.) To claim something
- D.) To accept

France’s interest in establishing New World colonies developed along with Spain’s. As early as 1534, French explorer Jacques Cartier was exploring the St. Lawrence River in present-day eastern Canada. He continued there until 1541 looking for precious gold and diamonds. He never found any. However, he and others did **acknowledge** that there was wealth to be made in the fishing industry there, so Cartier helped establish France’s interest in settling the Great Lakes area. This became France’s starting point for settlement in the New World.

From 1562 to 1565, French explorers **Jean Ribault** and **Rene de Laudonnière** attempted to establish claims to the southeastern coast. Ribault settled and built **Charlesfort** on modern-day Paris Island, South Carolina. The colony was short-lived due to starvation and mutiny from the soldiers who manned the fort. Likewise, in 1564 Laudonnière attempted to build a colony called Fort Caroline near modern day Jacksonville, Florida. However, Fort Caroline was short-lived. Later that year, Pedro Menendez de Aviles of Spain invaded the young settlement with a force of about 1,000 soldiers. Menendez and his forces slaughtered most of the soldiers and took over the area for Spain. In the same year he destroyed Fort Caroline, 1565, Menendez also established the town of **St. Augustine** in Florida.

Later, from 1685 to 1687, **René-Robert Cavalier de La Salle** traveled down the North American continent on the mighty Mississippi River. His travels took him all the way from eastern Canada to present-day Texas. He tried unsuccessfully to build a colony in Texas on the **Gulf of Mexico**.

La Salle’s explorations increased French interest in the **Mississippi River** and the middle regions of North America. Soon after his voyage down the Mississippi, French outposts sprang up along the mighty river. Of particular interest to French explorers was the **fur trade**. This industry required good relations with Native Americans. In 1698, the settlement of **Mobile** was established in modern-day Alabama along the Mobile River. Mobile exists to this day. Other towns and forts followed, including **New Orleans** in 1718 and Fort Toulouse in 1717. These initial settlements and forts were the beginnings of what would



Fig. 2. La Salle’s explorations down the Mississippi River helped to expand the French empire all over western North America. Reprinted with permission from Enchanted Learning.com

The Debatable Land (Unit Two)

develop into **French Louisiana**.

The French settlement of the Gulf Coast Region was significant for several reasons. First, the French were responsible for the growth of the fur trade. This trade involved trapping and hunting animals for their hides. Their hides could be used to make products such as clothing. The fur trade caused the French and the English to rely more heavily on the Native Americans. These people knew much about the North American landscape and hunting animals to produce furs. Consequently, Indian tribes became an even greater factor in building colonies here in America, especially among the French and the English. The Indians were no longer viewed as obstacles to settlement. Instead, they were seen as potential allies. As the French moved down the Mississippi and into Louisiana the British colonists on the east coast became very nervous; they became very interested in establishing a barrier zone to protect against any French invasion of their colonies on the east coast.

Self-Check:

- 1) After La Salle's exploration down the Mississippi River, how did French officials change their interests in the New World?
- 2) How were the French different from the Spanish in their treatment of the Indians?
- 3) What was the primary influence that the French had on European colonization?
- 4) Why did the French want to move down the Mississippi to colonize new lands?

Guided Reading Quiz:

1. Which great French explorer first explored Northeastern North America for the French?
2. In what modern state was Charlesfort located?
3. Which people killed most of the settlers at Fort Caroline?
4. Which Spanish settlement became the first permanent European settlement in North America?
5. Which great river did La Salle travel down?
6. Which type of commercial trade did France become interested in after La Salle's exploration of the Mississippi?
7. In what year was New Orleans established?
8. True or False? The fur trade required the French to have a very good relationship with the British?
9. True or False? The British in South Carolina helped the French get established in Louisiana because the South Carolina colonists needed trade partners?
10. True or False? The fur trade helped to improve the relationship between Native Americans and Europeans.