Samuel de Champlain

By
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Born in 1567 to Antoine de Champlain and Marguerite Le Roy in Brouage, France
  - Location along the coast led to stories and influences which influenced him

- His dad was a fishing boat captain and could not afford a formal education for Samuel
  - Spent his time on ships
  - Learned the sailor’s trade first-hand
Served 5 years in the French army

1598- Champlain boarded a ship bound for Spain

- Made stops on the Yucatan Peninsula, Guadeloupe, and Puerto Rico
- Kept detailed accounts of the Indians, vegetation, and animal life
Early Career

- Upon his return he told King Henry IV what he saw
- He was given a pension and brought to the service of the King
  - Served as a geographer and cartographer for 2 voyages
  - Made detailed drawings and notes of the land, rivers, Indians and vegetation
- Lost many of his men during a harsh winter on Saint Croix
  - Decided to stay instead of returning home
Early Career

- Planned to explore as far south as Florida
  - Problems with the ships and weather prevented him from doing so
- Returned to France in 1607
  - Wanted to create a settlement further up the St. Lawrence River
  - Wanted to be closer to the center of the fur trade
Fur Trade Monopoly

- Supported a government monopoly over the fur trade as a means to control and harness its profits for the development of a French colony.
- Petitioned the French Crown to restore the monopoly over the fur trade for the year of 1608:
  - Restoration of the monopoly allowed for the settlement of Quebec on July 3, 1608.
  - The monopoly only lasted one year.
- Champlain had formed the foundation of colonization by strengthening the fur trade and harnessing its profits.
July 3, 1608 Champlain founded the settlement of Quebec

- Brought the French fur trade closer to the source and increased the importance of the French-Indian relationship

- Huron and Algonquin tribes, primary clients of the French in the fur trade, were under constant attack from the Iroquois tribe

- He had to uphold the alliance the French made with those tribes in 1603, promising them aid and protection against the Iroquois
To protect alliance he traveled with a Huron-Algonquin war party into present day New York State to attack an Iroquois tribe

- Traveled down a lake which he named Lake Champlain

When they arrived, the Iroquois fled to the shore and barricaded themselves by cutting down trees

The war party voiced their intentions to fight, but agreed with the Iroquois that it was too dark and they would fight at sunrise
The next day Champlain led the Indians ashore and opened fire.
- They killed many of the Iroquois and took a dozen prisoners.

Iroquois prisoners were tortured.
- Champlain felt sympathy for the prisoners and criticized native allies for their cruel practices.

The win solidified the French relationship with the Indian tribes of the north.
Historians believe Champlain didn’t have a choice because remaining neutral would have opened the fur trade and French settlement to further attack from both sides.

If neutrality were a possibility:
- It would have opened relations with the Iroquois and allowed Champlain safe passage through the Hudson River.
- Champlain might have beat Henry Hudson to exploring the region.
What if he Remained Neutral?

- The area was settled by the Dutch and English who supplied weaponry to the Iroquois in their attacks on French settlements.
- The future decades of Iroquois contempt for the French was said to stem from Champlain’s decision and action against them.
Champlain’s Later Voyages

- Returned to France after his fifth voyage in the spring of 1610
- Signed a marriage contract with Helene Boulle
- During his sixth voyage (1611) he started Place Royale settlement
- Returned to France and then made his seventh voyage to Canada
  - Wanted to bring missionary work to Canada along with his commercial and exploration efforts
- Tried to spread Christianity on his eighth voyage (1615) but found himself preparing for another battle against the Iroquois
Champlain’s Later Voyages

- The Iroquois tribe was better prepared
  - They positioned themselves inside a fort on Onondaga Lake
- Attack on the Iroquois fort failed and Champlain was wounded
  - Champlain and the Huron tribe retreated
- Returned to France in September of 1616
- After his ninth voyage in 1618, he was appointed Governor of New France
Champlain’s Later Voyages

- Returned to Quebec in 1620
  - He found the settlement in poor condition and made minor repairs
- Returned to France in 1624
  - He became lieutenant of New France
  - Empowered him to wage war and set out for further exploration
- Quebec settlement fell apart
  - Important repairs and reconstruction took place after his eleventh voyage in 1626
Champlain’s bigger and stronger fort was turned over peacefully to the English on July 20, 1629
- Champlain and his French settlers were treated with respect and taken to England
- Champlain protested the illegal acquisition of Canada by England
- March 29, 1632- Canada was returned to France
- The twelfth and final voyage of Champlain in 1633 brought him back to Quebec
  - Made repairs and focused on the fur trade
- Suffered a stroke in October of 1635
  - Died on Christmas day
Bibliography


