Chapter Two

PEOPLING THE LAND

The Origin of Man and the Animals

2.1

A long time ago during a blizzard, a handsome young man entered an igloo. He was welcomed into the bed and slept with the entire family. The next morning when the family awoke, the young man was gone. Seeing only animal tracks outside, the father proclaimed that they had been deceived, and that the young man had been the lead dog disguised as a man. His daughter became pregnant and the father was ashamed of what kind of children she might have. He took her in a kayak to a small island, where he abandoned her. The lead dog kept the girl alive by swimming to the island and giving her tender meat. The girl gave birth to six young. Three of them were Inuit children, but the other three had bigger ears and noses like snouts. The young mother sewed some seal skins into a large slipper, placed the three strange children inside, and pushed them off towards the south. Some say all white men and Indians are descended from those three dog children.

Image by Gilbert Hay

Later the father went in a umiak with some men to take his daughter off the island. A storm arose and the boatmen were afraid that the overloaded boat would capsize. To lighten the load, they threw the daughter overboard. When she tried to climb back into the boat, the father cut off her fingers. These became the seals. She tried again, and he cut off her hands, which became the walruses. She made one last attempt, and he cut off her forearms, which became the whales. She sank to the bottom of the ocean and became Sedna, or Taluliyuk, the woman who controls all the sea beasts.

TOPIC 2.1

Peopling the Land

Why do you think early peoples started moving from Africa to other areas?

How has modern technology influenced the peopling of the land?

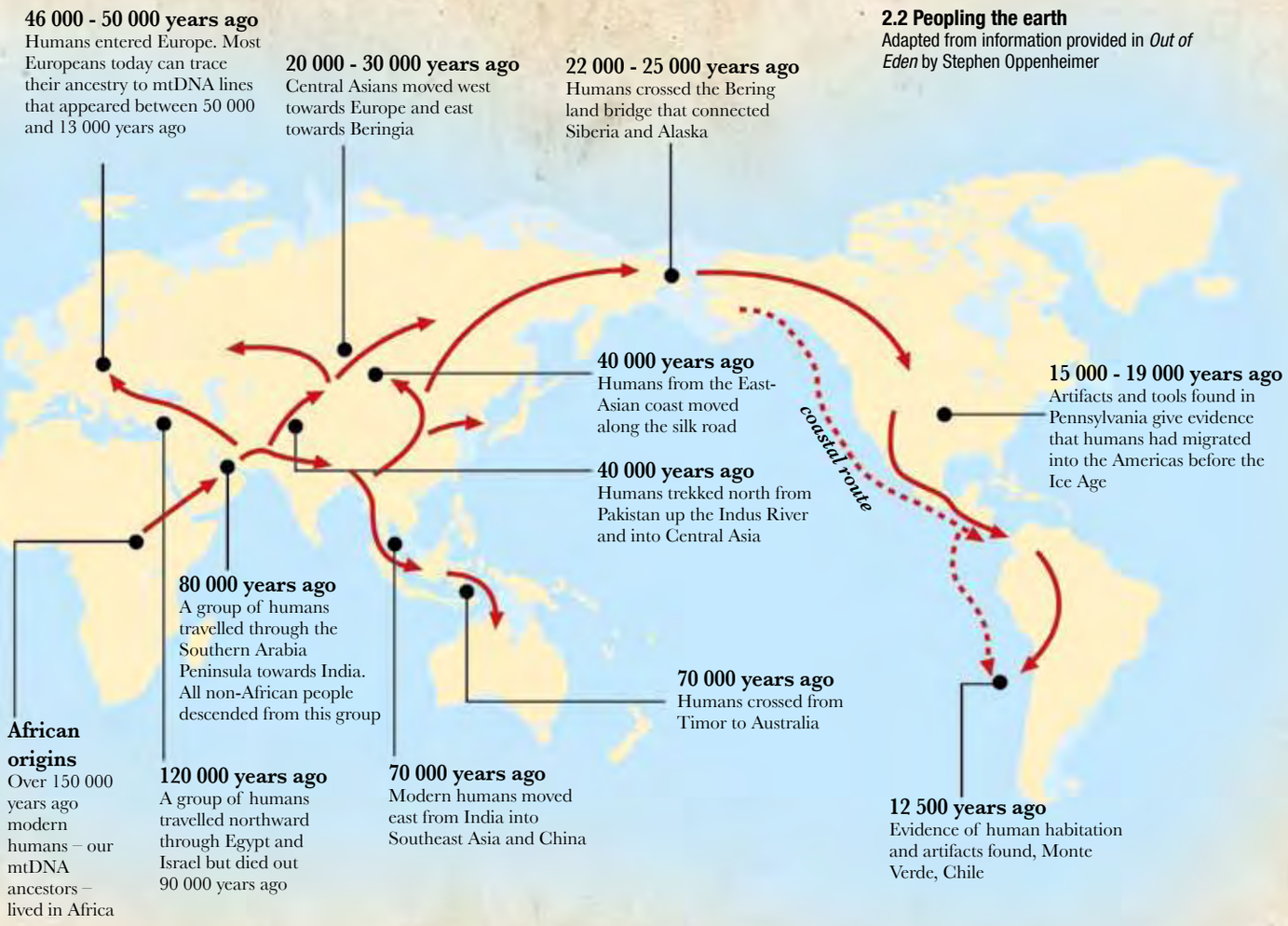
Introduction

Let's start at the beginning. How did humankind populate Earth? There are many theories about this. Most cultures have creation stories or beliefs that suggest humans are the product of intelligent design. Other people use scientific data to help explain that *Homo sapiens* (humans) first evolved in Africa about 200 000 years ago and then spread around the world.

If we accept the second explanation, a question then arises: how did humans get from Africa to the Americas, which are surrounded by water? One theory is that people migrated across a land bridge called **Beringia**. This land bridge, which is now under water, connected Siberia to Alaska at some point during the last ice age – sometime between 9000 and 50 000 years ago. It is speculated that these people then spread across the Americas, including Newfoundland and Labrador, and diversified into many culturally distinct groups.

Once Beringia disappeared beneath the sea, the Americas were again isolated from the rest of the world. As historian and writer Peter Watson notes, this meant that "… [at] the close of the fifteenth century … there were two huge groups of people, on two vast landmasses … entirely separated from one another and developing side-by-side, oblivious to the existence of each other." Europeans would later refer to these two "worlds" as the "**Old World**"* (the parts of the world then known to Europeans, Asians, and Africans) and the "**New World**"* (the Americas and Oceania).

*These are Eurocentric labels. Before contact, Europeans had no idea that the Americas existed.



2.2 Peopling the earth
Adapted from information provided in *Out of Eden* by Stephen Oppenheimer

Experiencing The Arts

Part of the craft of storytelling is preserving the experiences of our ancestors. Stories from the past are sometimes fictional, while others are more factual. Often, there is a blending of both. Either way, they provide insight into the past.

Much of this section of the chapter is about the distant past. What we know of this period is limited. It is difficult to conduct a detailed understanding of the distant past because there is a limited amount of archaeological information available.

The same is often true about our own personal histories. We most likely know a fair bit about our parents or guardians, but know less about our grandparents, and less again about our great-grandparents. Much of what we do know has likely been passed on through family stories.

In this series of exercises, you will need to use your tools as an artist (and historian) to construct a story about a part of your past that you wish to explore. By the end of the chapter, you will be asked to share that story with close family or friends as part of the private tradition of storytelling.

For this exercise, compile a list of questions about your personal past that you would like to have answered. Keep the list in a convenient place so that you can add to it when you get an idea. (Remember, inspiration can come at any time or in any place.)

2.3 World population by continent including world's largest cities, 1500 CE
Statistics for this period are approximations. Historians' figures can vary widely – particularly for Africa and the Americas. The data given above is based largely on the work of Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, and William Denevan.

2.4 Although most of the people in the Americas in the 15th century lived an agrarian lifestyle, there were also larger, sophisticated centres of civilization such as the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan (in Mexico) and the Inca city of Machu Picchu (in Peru). Shown here are the ruins of Machu Picchu. Built in approximately 1430 it was designated a World Heritage Site in 1983 for being "an absolute masterpiece of architecture and a unique testimony to the Inca civilization."

2.5 Various Aboriginal groups of the Americas
This illustration first appeared in the Swedish encyclopedia Nordisk Familjebok in 1904.

Population Distribution

At the close of the fifteenth century, there were approximately 40-60 million people living in the Americas (although estimates vary widely on this number). The most densely settled parts of the Americas were the modern-day sites of Mexico and Peru. These areas were largely **agrarian** with a few large centres, such as the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). In 1500, approximately 250 000 people lived in Tenochtitlan, making it larger than any European city at the time. In the other parts of the Americas (especially modern-day Brazil, Canada, and the United States), the population consisted mostly of hunters and gatherers.

It has been estimated that a **hunter-gatherer** in the Americas needed about 10 square kilometres of land to provide him with enough resources to survive. Once the population density exceeded this, some of the hunter-gatherers had to move to find new resources. This, along with conflict between different groups and changes in environmental conditions, may explain why groups spread out across the Americas.

Although some farming was practised in North America prior to European contact, much of North America's population belonged to hunter-gatherer societies. There was an extensive trade network between many of the groups. Trade allowed these groups to acquire resources not found in their own environment and to build alliances with neighbouring groups. Goods traded included food (such as dried fish, maize, and beans), raw materials (such as obsidian, **chert**, and shells), and manufactured items (such as pottery, knives, and needles).

2.6 A Labrador Archaic arrowhead

2.7 Trade patterns in North America
What was traded from Newfoundland and Labrador? How far was it traded? Why do you suppose this was traded over such distances? Source: *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis People* by John Roberts

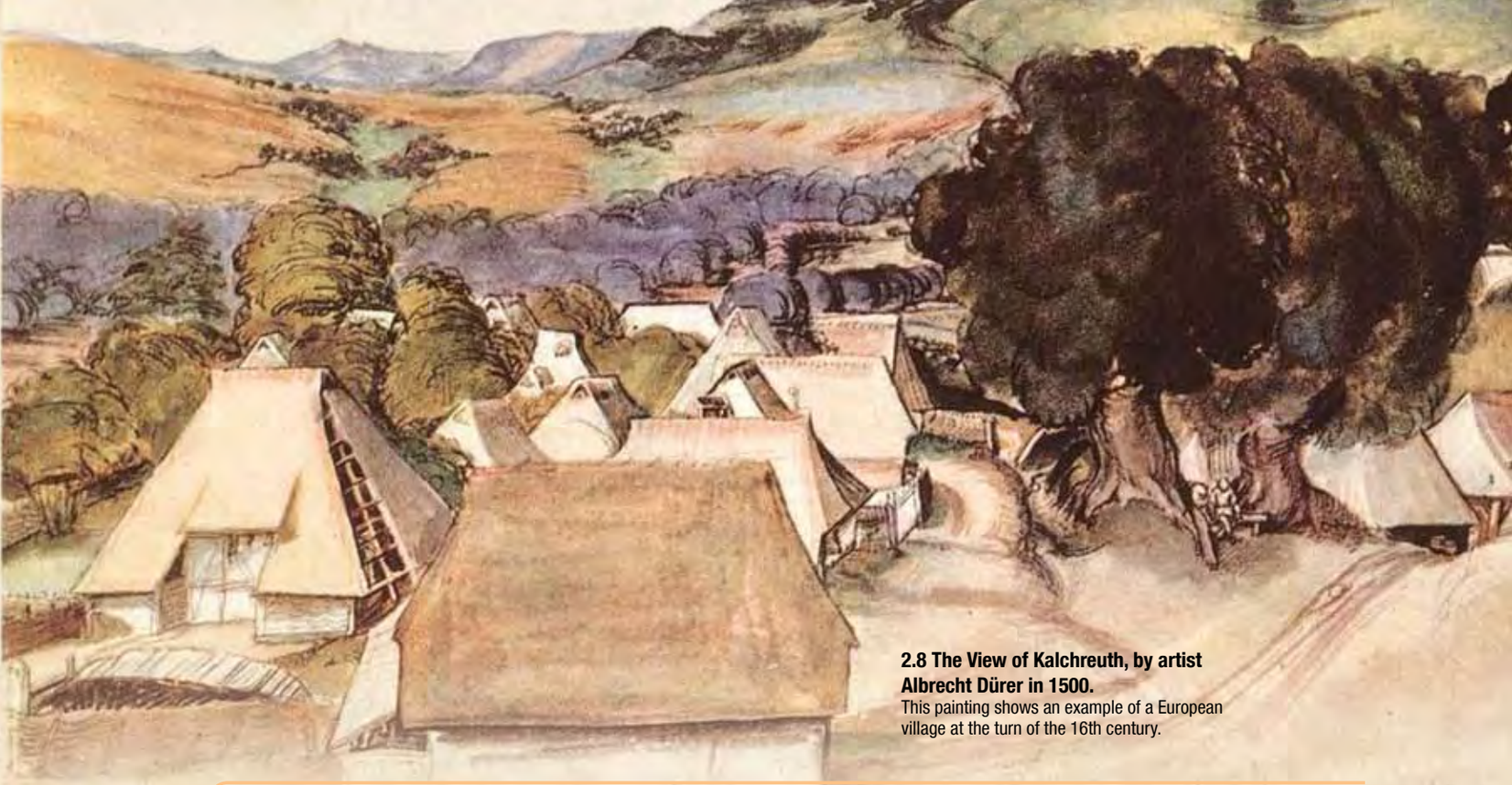
BCE - Before Common Era
CE - Common Era
EC - European Contact

After agriculture, the fisheries employed the most people in medieval Europe.

The map above shows some of the known established trading networks. Archaeologists have been able to learn about these trading routes through the discovery of artifacts in sites other than those from which they originated. For instance, projectile points made from minerals found in Labrador have been found in the St. Lawrence Valley.

Meanwhile, across the ocean, there were approximately 80-100 million people living in Europe. Although the population distribution varied throughout the region, it was largely rural and agricultural. Most groups in Europe and Asia practised farming and had some domesticated animals. Experts suggest that in 1500 only about one out of every 10 Europeans lived in a town with a population over 5000.

At this time Europe was undergoing rapid population growth. An increasing population meant a need for larger food supplies. To meet the demand, more lands were brought into production. Nevertheless, there still remained a demand for inexpensive sources of protein to feed the masses. Europe began to look outward for resources.



2.8 The View of Kalchreuth, by artist Albrecht Dürer in 1500.
This painting shows an example of a European village at the turn of the 16th century.

Questions:

1. The area of Newfoundland and Labrador is 405 720 square kilometres. Based on the information in the text, how many people could survive in modern day Newfoundland and Labrador as hunter-gatherers? Is this a realistic figure, given the geography of the province? Explain.

2. Assuming that humans migrated into the Americas via Beringia, why do you think most peoples continued the migration south? Why might some have stayed in the north?

3. Describe the pattern of distribution of cities throughout the world c. 1500. What inferences can be made, based on the population distribution for each continent?

4. What would be the relative advantages and challenges of living in:
   a. A hunter-gatherer society versus an agricultural society?
   b. A rural area versus an urban area?

2.9 In the 16th century, most of the world's largest and grandest cities lay in Asia.
This diorama shows Peking (now known as Beijing) in the late 15th century. It is believed that Peking was the largest city in the world from 1425 to 1650.

TOPIC 2.2

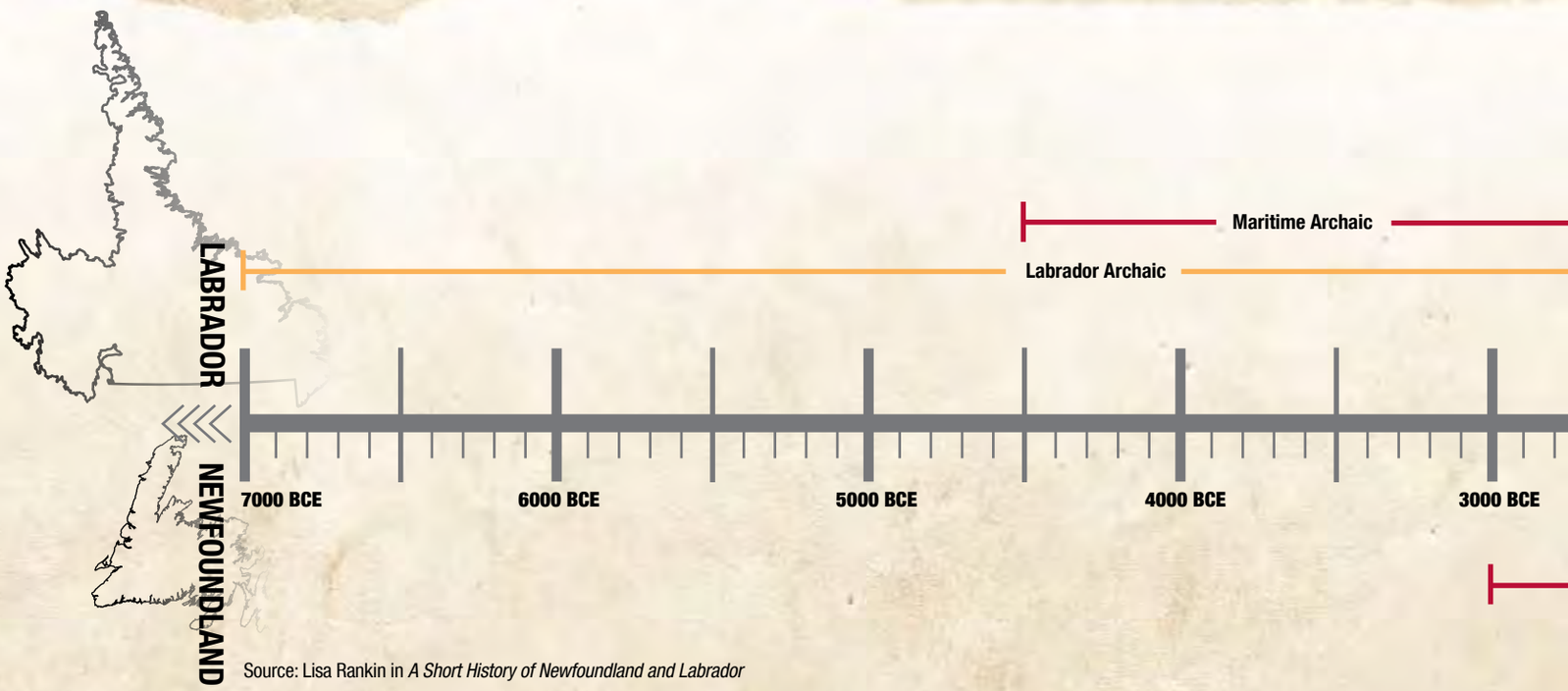
Who Was Here

Were prehistoric technologies primitive?

Were all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador originally immigrants?

Introduction

While Aboriginal people assert they have always been here, archaeologists estimate that the first human residents in our province arrived about 7000 BCE in Labrador. Several thousands of years later, they were followed by other groups – some of which lived here for only a few hundred years before disappearing. Who were these people? Where did they live? While we cannot answer all of these questions, we know that there were several waves of migrations in Newfoundland and Labrador by different groups of **AmerIndians** and **Paleo-Eskimos**. These groups were later followed by the Thule and the Norse. Some of the groups probably interacted and this may have affected where certain groups settled.



Source: Lisa Rankin in *A Short History of Newfoundland and Labrador*

2.10

MEANWHILE ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD ...

8000 BCE
Earliest permanent farming villages in Fertile Crescent

4500 BCE
Plow is introduced in Europe

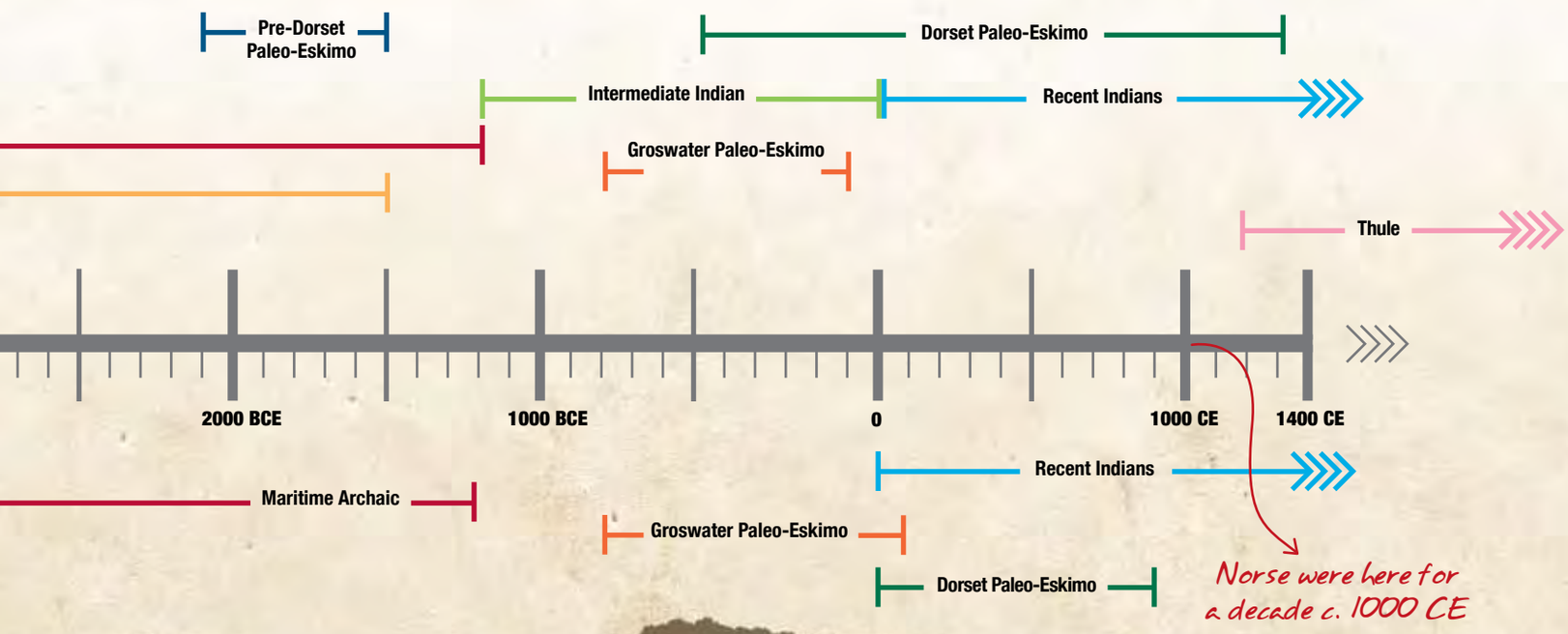
3100 BCE
Work begins on earliest phase of Stonehenge

2150 BCE
Work begins on the first pyramid (the Step Pyramid at Saqqara)

AmerIndians

According to many archaeologists, AmerIndians are the descendants of the people who migrated across the Beringia land bridge that connected Siberia to Alaska during the last ice age. There have been several different cultural groups of AmerIndians who settled in Newfoundland and Labrador prior to contact with Europeans. These include Labrador Archaic, Maritime Archaic, Intermediate Indians, and Recent Indians. It is not known what happened to cause the disappearance of each of these groups. In some cases, a group may have died out because of a lack of food resources. It is also possible that one group evolved into another.

2.11 These bird-shaped pebbles were found in a Maritime Archaic cemetery in Port au Choix. They may have had a religious function or have been used simply for decoration or as toys.



776 BCE
First Olympic Games held in Greece

51 BCE
Cleopatra becomes the ruler of Eygpt

0
Approximate date given as birth of Christ

225 CE
Early form of gunpowder invented in China

868 CE
First known printed book, the Diamond Sutra

2.12 Artist William B. Ritchie's conception of House 55, a Dorset Paleo-Eskimo structure located at Phillip's Garden, Port au Choix. The reconstructed archaeological site of this Dorset house can be seen at Port au Choix National Historic Site.

Paleo-Eskimos

About 2100 BCE a new people, Paleo-Eskimos, moved into northern Labrador – perhaps from Greenland or the high Arctic. ("Paleo-Eskimo" literally means "old Eskimo.") These people were culturally different from the AmerIndians. The first group of Paleo-Eskimos, known as "Pre-Dorset," tended to live in sheltered inner areas along the north Labrador coast. This group seems to have experienced a population decline starting around 1500 BCE. By 800 BCE, a new group called the "Groswater Paleo-Eskimo" was living at various sites throughout our province. They resided here until about 100 BCE in Labrador and 100 CE in Newfoundland. About 500 BCE a new culture, the Dorset Paleo-Eskimo, arrived in Labrador from the north. At the beginning of the Common Era, Dorset sites were distributed along the entire Labrador coast and on the island of Newfoundland. By 900 CE the Dorset had disappeared from the island of Newfoundland, and by 1300 CE had mostly disappeared from Labrador. As with the early AmerIndians, we can only hypothesize why the different groups disappeared.

2.13 Migration patterns in eastern North America
Based on information from *Historical Atlas of Canada – From the Beginning to 1800, Vol. 1* by Cole R. Harris

Experiencing The Arts

Learn about another side of artist William B. Ritchie on page 642 and look for other images of early peoples in this chapter by this artist.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

EVIDENCE

In order to construct an understanding of the past, you need information. Information becomes evidence when used for a particular purpose, such as answering a question, supporting a position, or interpreting the past.

The degree to which a question can be answered, or a position supported by evidence, is a function of the quantity and quality of the information available. In order to construct an interpretation of a past event it is useful to have many sources. Each source needs to be examined in terms of its quality. For example, some sources may be biased and provide a limited or even distorted account of an event – intentionally or not.

Archaeology is the study of the past cultural behaviour of humans through the material remains, or artifacts, that people leave behind. Besides studying these artifacts, how objects were grouped when they were found can provide insight into their use. The oldest known grave in the Americas, and possibly the world, is a 7500-year-old Labrador Archaic burial mound located in L'Anse Amour, Labrador. A Labrador Archaic adolescent was buried at this site in a ceremonial manner. The body was wrapped and placed facedown in a pit and then a large flat stone was placed on the lower back. Archaeological evidence indicates that food was cooked on fires that were lit around the body. Weapons and tools were placed in the grave, possibly as offerings, and then it was covered with a large mound of rocks. The manner in which this youth was buried suggests that he or she may have had an important role within the tribe or that his or her death had a special significance.

2.15 Labrador Archaic artifacts
Shown above are some of the items found in the grave: a whistle made from bird bone; a whetstone used for sharpening tools; a worked walrus tusk; and an antler pestle, which was possibly used for grinding graphite to mix with red ochre to make paint.

Question:

Besides archaeological evidence, what other sources could you use to find evidence?

2.14 Maritime Archaic stone axe head

2.16 Thule artifacts
(below left) A handle and circular blade from a Thule knife known as an ulu, c. 1550.
(below right) A polar bear tooth that was likely worn as a Thule amulet or for decoration.

Thule

About 800 years ago, a people known as Thule reached northern Labrador and began their migration south along the Labrador coast. This group originally came from northern Alaska and ultimately spread across the Canadian Arctic and Greenland. As Thule adapted their lifestyle to fit the Labrador environment, they became a distinct cultural group known as "Labrador Inuit." (Archaeologists tend to use the term "Thule" for this group until about 1550 CE.) Thus, Thule are the direct ancestors of Inuit in Labrador today.

Prehistoric technologies

The early peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador developed technologies, some quite sophisticated, to be able to survive in their environment. The tools they developed were made with materials they found at hand – stone, wood, or animal products. When animals were killed, there was little waste. In addition to eating the meat from an animal, needles and other tools were made from the bones, and clothing was made from the hide.

2.17

Maritime Archaic toggling harpoon

This was the ultimate in sea-mammal hunting technology. A line would attach the tip to the shaft. Once the tip entered the animal, it separated from the shaft and twisted, or "toggled," in the wound as the line tightened, making it virtually impossible for the animal to escape. Thousands of years after the Maritime Archaic used these, American whalers reinvented the same technology.

2.18

Maritime Archaic needles in carrying case

These bird-bone needles have eyes of less than one millimetre wide, indicating they were probably used for fine needlework. Eight such needles were found in this needle case, made from a caribou bone, at a Maritime Archaic cemetery in Port au Choix.

Dorset soapstone pots These were used both for heat and for cooking. The replica set up below shows how the pots were used.

2.19

2.20

THE PROCESS FOR MAKING SOAPSTONE* POTS

1. The weathered surface of the soapstone cliff was removed by pounding it with large cobble hammerstones.

2. The outside of the pot was shaped by carving a groove in the cliff face.

3. The pot shape was then removed from the cliff by chiselling and prying.

4. The inside was hollowed out and finished with scrapers and smoothing tools.

*A major soapstone quarry was found at Fleur de Lys on the Baie Verte Peninsula. It has been designated a National Historic Site.

Groswater Paleo-Eskimo knives and scrapers

These tools were shaped from **chert**. The scrapers had a converse edge for scraping hides and other materials. The ridges on the edges were probably used to make grooves in bones and antler. The knives were attached to wooden handles with sinew. While it is rare for wooden artifacts to survive from this far back, wooden handles could be preserved by permafrost conditions.

2.21

Questions:

1. Between 7000 BCE and 1000 CE, Newfoundland and Labrador was inhabited by several groups of people.
    a. How many groups inhabited Labrador?
    b. How many groups inhabited the island of Newfoundland?
    c. Give two reasons that might explain this difference.
    d. What might be some implications of multiple groups inhabiting the same area at the same time?

2. Considering site and situation, what would have been three advantages and three challenges of:
    a. living in Labrador c. 100 CE?
    b. living on the island of Newfoundland c.100 CE?

3. Which of the prehistoric technologies illustrated do you think shows the most ingenuity? Explain.

2.22

FIRST EUROPEANS IN THE NEW WORLD: THE NORSE

According to a thirteenth century Norse saga, the first person from the "Old World" to reach North America was Leif Eriksson, a Viking explorer who lived from 975-1020 CE. Five centuries before Columbus made his historic voyage, Eriksson sailed west from Greenland and reached a new land that he called "Vinland." Soon other Norse explorers followed. On one of these voyages, the explorers settled for a time at a site on the tip of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula.

This place, now called L'Anse aux Meadows, was discovered in 1960 and radiocarbon dated to 1014 CE. The first authentic Norse site discovered in North America, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1977. Artifacts found at the site include a spindle whorl (used in spinning) and a copper alloy dress pin. Although the Norse were traditionally farmers, the evidence at L'Anse aux Meadows points to the site being used for ship repair and possibly as a gathering point for goods going north. Archaeologists tell us the site was occupied for short periods for over a decade and then abandoned.

2.23 *Portage on the Moisie* by William Hind

TOPIC 2.3

Life circa 1400

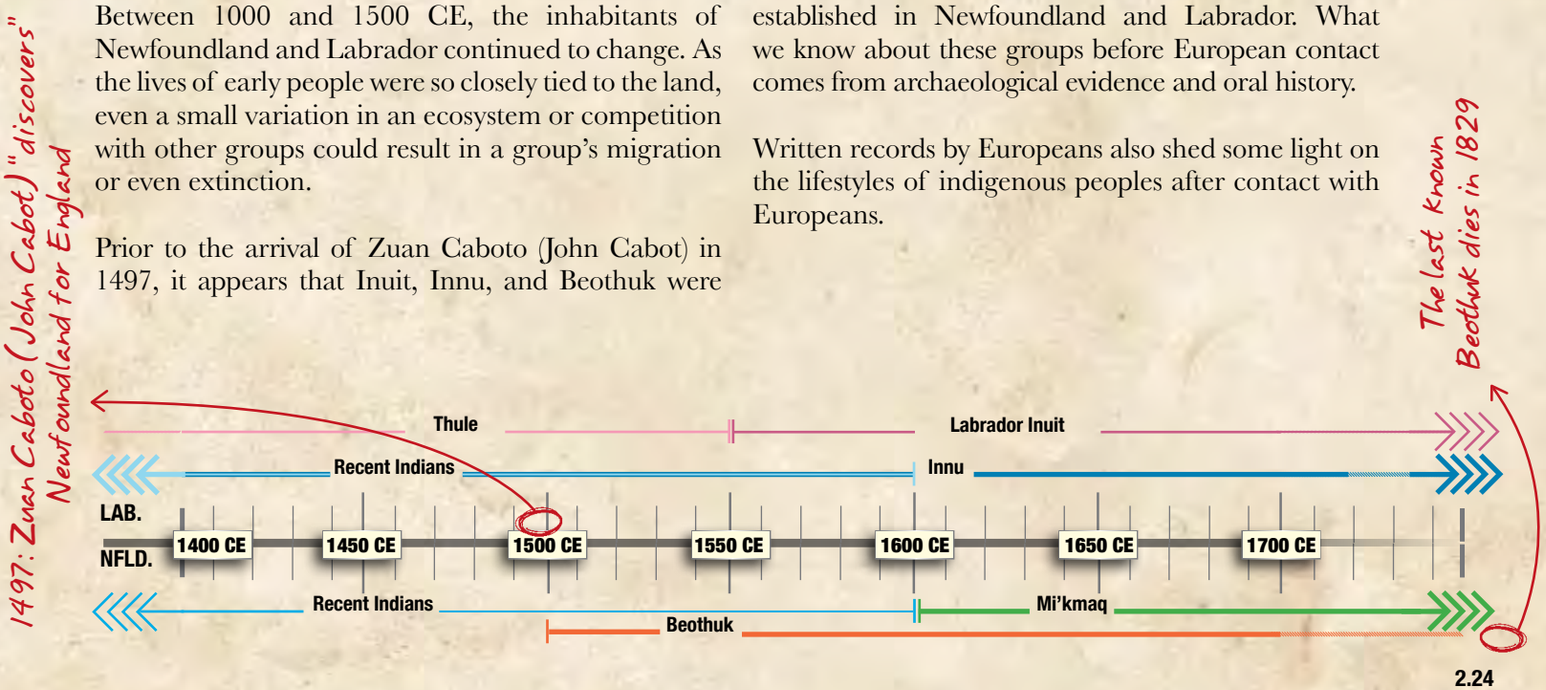
Why were there differences in the ways of life among First Nations and Inuit?

Why would Aboriginal peoples choose to inhabit this place?

Between 1000 and 1500 CE, the inhabitants of Newfoundland and Labrador continued to change. As the lives of early people were so closely tied to the land, even a small variation in an ecosystem or competition with other groups could result in a group's migration or even extinction.

Prior to the arrival of Zuan Caboto (John Cabot) in 1497, it appears that Inuit, Innu, and Beothuk were established in Newfoundland and Labrador. What we know about these groups before European contact comes from archaeological evidence and oral history.

Written records by Europeans also shed some light on the lifestyles of indigenous peoples after contact with Europeans.



2.24

2.25 First Nations and Inuit mid-1600s

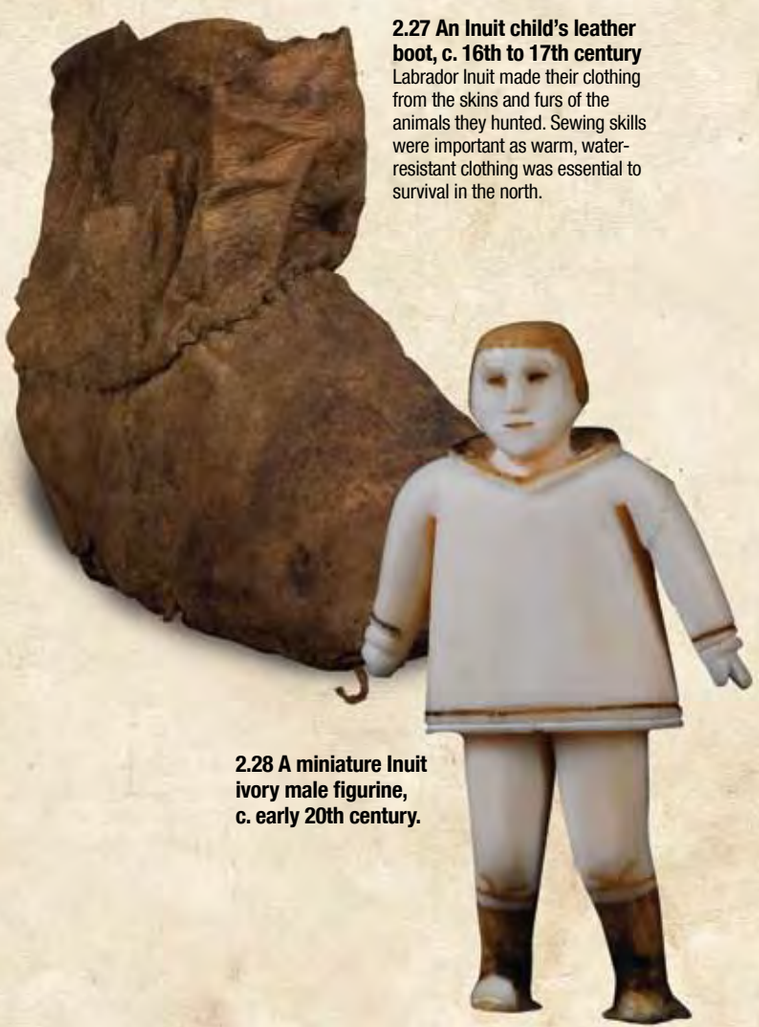
2.26 *Whale Hunting Near Nassaujak,* 1976. Stencil Print by Jeetaloo Akulukjuk and Tommy Evvik
Umiat, which can carry up to 20 people, were used for transportation and for hunting whales. Whales provided Inuit with meat and oil, which could be used in soapstone lamps. In addition, whale bones were used to make tools and as the framework for skin tents.

Inuit

Labrador Inuit are descendants of Thule. Much of what we know about Inuit lifestyle before contact with Europeans is based on oral tradition and archaeological evidence.

Inuit lifestyle involved a seasonal round, with groups moving to pursue resources such as seals, whales, and caribou. Inuit used **umiat**, large open skin-covered boats, for transportation and to hunt large mammals such as whales. They also used one-person **kajait** for transportation and for the caribou hunt. In the winter, dog teams pulled large sleds called **kamutet** to assist travel across the land and ice.

Housing was seasonally adapted. Inuit had summer and winter camps in locations they returned to year after year. Typically people lived in single-family dwellings. Winter houses were earthen huts banked by sods with a roof supported by whale ribs and shoulder blades. The entrance was a long tunnel. These houses were well insulated and efficiently heated with soapstone lamps. In the summer, Inuit lived in skin tents with whalebone frameworks. These were light and relatively easy to set up and take down for travel.



2.27 An Inuit child's leather boot, c. 16th to 17th century
Labrador Inuit made their clothing from the skins and furs of the animals they hunted. Sewing skills were important as warm, water-resistant clothing was essential to survival in the north.

2.28 A miniature Inuit ivory male figurine, c. early 20th century.

Innu

Innu oral tradition says that Innu have always been in North America. Archaeological evidence is less clear. Many **anthropologists** believe the immediate forebearers of Innu were the Point Revenge people who lived along parts of the Labrador coast. About 1400 CE, Innu moved into the interior of Labrador as Thule appeared along the coast.

Like our knowledge of other peoples who inhabited Newfoundland and Labrador at this time, much of what we know about Innu life comes from oral tradition, interactions with Europeans, and archaeological findings.

Innu relied on caribou as a primary resource – using it as a main source of food, clothing, and shelter. Consequently they followed the caribou migration. Innu supplemented their diet with fish and small game like beaver. As part of their seasonal round, some Innu returned to the coast in the summer.

Innu travelled by canoe in summer and snowshoe and toboggan in winter. Because they moved from place to place, Innu lived in **kapminaute** (also referred to as Tshishtuekan-patshuianitshuap) that could be erected quickly. These were made of bent alders, covered in birch bark and caribou hide. Innu took the caribou hides with them and built a new kapminaute frame at their next location.

2.29 This lithograph, entitled *Nasquapees: Otelne and Arkaskhe,* is based on a watercolour done by William Hind in 1861.

2.30 An Innu spike and thimble game, early 20th century.

2.31 A model of an Innu tent, or kapminaute, c. early 20th century. Each kapminaute had a hearth near the entrance with a fire in it that was kept continually lit.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

EVIDENCE

When information is used to support an argument, it becomes "evidence". In the excerpt below, Daniel Ashini disputes what some archaeologists cite as evidence. Ashini suggests that the information can be interpreted differently depending on one's viewpoint.

Innu are using the opportunity created by mining exploration to further explore their history. They are looking for new archaeological data to help provide a more complete understanding of their past.

When this article was written, Daniel Ashini was serving as Director of Innu Rights and Environment for the Innu Nation. He has also been involved in archaeological work.

Question:

Does Ashini make a strong case to support his contention that evidence can be interpreted differently, depending on one's viewpoint?

Innu researchers dig into their history

2.32 (Excerpted from an article by Camille Fouillard, 2000.)

"This is important work but I have problems with the way archaeologists label different things and with some of the terms they use," says Ashini. "For example, they have given our ancestors different names like Maritime Archaic Indians, Intermediate Period Indians and Point Revenge Indians. These archaeologists only identify a clear tie between the last group and the Innu, as if we were all different and distinct peoples."

Archaeologists claim the evidence is inconclusive and use these different names to interpret information to suit their needs, says Ashini. This is a problem for the Innu during land rights negotiations when governments cite archaeological research to say that the Innu have not been in Labrador for at least the last 8000 years. But Ashini says the archaeologists' theories don't hold up.

"We know these people are our ancestors and just because they used different tools and set up their campsites a little differently, in my opinion that doesn't make them different peoples," says Ashini.

"A people develops and evolves over time from contact with other peoples and adapts itself to different circumstances. Because European people use cars instead of horse and buggy, because they live in different kinds of houses, use tractors instead of manual ploughs, they are not different peoples from their ancestors."

Ashini added that some archaeologists like Stephen Loring (of the Smithsonian Institute) are beginning to see that the labels may be incorrect and don't tell the whole picture. They have begun to reassess their interpretations …

2.33 Beothuk pendants
Among the most striking Beothuk artifacts are carved bone pieces. They have been found in bundles, sewn to clothing, or strung as a necklace. Some of these carvings can be identified as stylized animals or parts thereof and may have been used as amulets.

2.34 Beothuk projectile points

2.35 Gaming pieces
decorated on one side and plain on the other were tossed in the air. Complex scores based on the numbers that landed face up or face down were kept, probably using bead counters.

Beothuk

At the time Europeans arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador, between 500 and 700 Beothuk are believed to have inhabited the island of Newfoundland. As the direct descendants of one of the prehistoric populations that are collectively referred to by archaeologists as "Recent Indians," Beothuk represent the historic period of this native culture. Lists of Beothuk words, obtained from captives, in combination with archaeological findings, have allowed scientists to propose a relationship of Beothuk (i.e., the language) with the Algonquian language family.

Because Beothuk had few interactions with Europeans, our knowledge about their culture is limited. What we know about Beothuk lifestyle, social organization, language, and religion is based on contemporary documents, information obtained from captives, and archaeological findings.

During the summer season small Beothuk family groups or bands roamed along stretches of the coast, harvesting a variety of marine resources, as well as birds and their eggs. In fall they met with other families inland for the big caribou drive, which supplied them with large quantities of meat for the winter. In pursuit of their seasonal round, Beothuk travelled throughout the island employing a variety of hunting and fishing techniques and several methods to preserve surplus food stuff. Several families or bands overwintered together and thereby created opportunities for socializing, storytelling, teaching, and sharing songs. At the end of the winter, they celebrated the ochring ceremony, a 10 day feast at which every member of the assembled group received a new coat of red ochre. The ochre was considered to be a mark of identity and the first coat, applied in infancy, a sign of initiation.

Like other native groups, Beothuk used the resources of their immediate environment for all their needs. Tools, arrowheads, bows and arrows, and cooking pots were made from stone, bone, wood, or bark. Clothing was made from caribou and other animal skins. Summer shelters, known as **mamateeks**, were constructed from wooden poles bound together and covered with birch bark. Winter mamateeks were more elaborate structures, being surrounded by **berms** and covered with many layers of sods for better insulation. Birch bark canoes allowed Beothuk to travel on lakes, rivers, and the ocean. For winter travel they employed sleds and snowshoes, the latter made of wood and rawhide strips.

2.36 The construction of a mamateek

Mi'kmaq

This is the adjective form of Mi'kmaq.

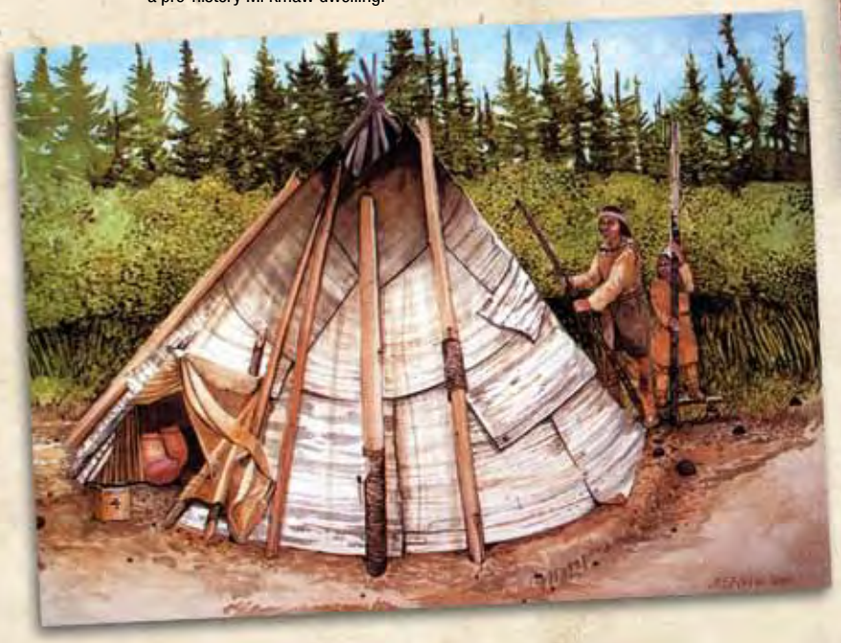
Mi'kmaw ancestral homelands of Mi'kma'ki stretched across much of what is today Atlantic Canada. The name for the Newfoundland part of this territory, **Ktaqamkuk**, means "land across the water." While Newfoundland Mi'kmaw oral tradition maintains they lived in Ktaqamkuk prior to European contact, the first evidence of Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland dates from 1602.

Traditional Mi'kmaw life in Atlantic Canada followed a seasonal round. Most of their food came from the sea. Consequently, Mi'kmaq spent from early spring until fall near the shores – harvesting resources of the sea and land as they came into season. This included fish, which they took with hook and line, **weirs**, and spears. A short distance inland, they hunted caribou in their spring migration.

In the fall, many Mi'kmaq moved inland, where they stayed for the colder months. There they hunted large animals like bears and caribou, fished from rivers, and trapped small game like beavers and partridges.

In summer, Mi'kmaq used birch bark canoes. They ranged from 5.5 to 9 metres (18 to 30 feet) in length and were lightweight, making them easy to portage. In winter, snowshoes were used for walking and toboggans were used to transport heavy goods.

2.37 Mi'kmaw dwelling
Shown here is artist William B. Ritchie's interpretation of a pre-history Mi'kmaw dwelling.



2.38

2.39 Mi'kmaw boots
These boots are made from tanned caribou skins that have been stitched together with thread made from deer or caribou sinew.

Questions:

1. Use a graphic organizer to compare the traditional way of life of Inuit, Innu, Beothuk, and Mi'kmaq in terms of food, shelter, and travel at the end of the fifteenth century. What similarities and differences do you note?
2. What are the main sources of knowledge about the lifestyles of First Nations and Inuit who lived in our province prior to European arrival?

TOPIC 2.4

Developments in Europe

Why is the "discovery" of the Americas seen as such a major event in history?

What discovery would you like to see that would change society?

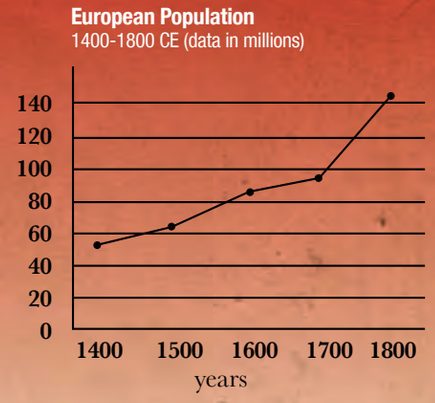
2.40 A perception of earth in the 1400s
This illustration by modern artist Antar Dayal shows how some Europeans likely perceived the world across the ocean in the late 1400s. The idea of venturing out into the Atlantic terrified many European mariners of the time – some even believed they would sail over the edge of the world. They were a superstitious lot, who believed in sea monsters, giant whirlpools that swallowed ships, and strange lands prowled by man-eating demons.

Introduction

Across the Atlantic, meanwhile, developments were taking place in Europe that would have unexpected and far-reaching consequences for Newfoundland and Labrador. In the 1500s, Western Europe was changing: its population was increasing, it was becoming wealthy, and it was making advances in technologies that encouraged exploration. These factors led to the establishment of colonies throughout the world. The Newfoundland fishery was a consequence of this expansion.

Changes in Europe

Since the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 CE, Western Europe had become a rather stagnated part of the world. Between 500 and 1200 there was little innovation – life continued practically unchanged from year to year. This characterizes what is sometimes referred to as a **traditional economy**, in which people use resources in the same way as previous generations. However, between 1200 and 1400 Europe began to change in subtle ways. In particular, universities were



established. This resulted in an increase of knowledge, and eventually created a society in which new ideas emerged and spread.

By the 1400s, Western Europe was "rethinking" ideas related to many aspects of life, including travel and navigation. New advances in navigation and map construction would help transform travel by sea. In particular, the application of astronomy and mathematics to navigation early in the 1500s allowed mariners to calculate their position when out of sight of land. Prior to this time, extended voyages were virtually impossible to undertake. Combined with improvements in shipbuilding, this development encouraged European adventurers to begin seeking sea routes to Asia.

Fig. 3.3

"The discovery of America was important intellectually for Europeans because the new lands and peoples challenged traditional ideas ... Africa and Asia, though distant and unfamiliar for most people, had always been known about. America was entirely unexpected ... "

– Peter Watson in *Ideas: A History from Fire to Freud*

2.42 New Technology
(top) The globe as depicted by Martin Behaim in 1492. Behaim was a German navigator and geographer to the King of Portugal. Note how the globe shows only islands between Europe and Japan: the existence of North America was not even suspected.

(bottom left) Mariner's Astrolabe from Isle aux Morts shipwreck mid-1600s. This brass astrolabe was made in 1628, likely in Portugal by Joas Dyas.

(bottom right) The compass shown is from Italy and was made c. 1570.

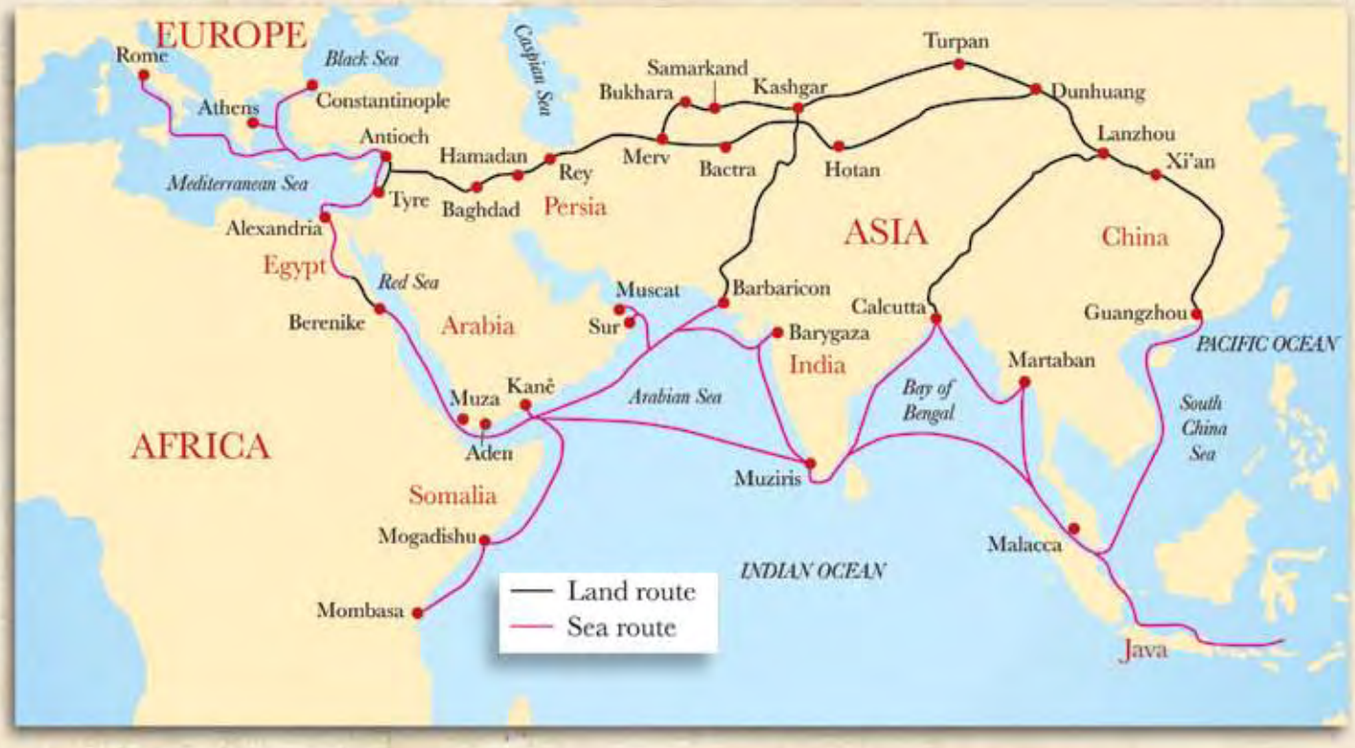
Experiencing The Arts

In the previous exercise, you created a list of questions about your personal past that you would like to have answered. Select one question (or several related questions) to explore.

In this exercise, you need to identify sources of information that you can use to help you construct your story. While oral history research will most likely be a primary means to gather the main information that you want, you should also consult other sources. (This includes talking to other people, looking at family photographs and memorabilia, and reading newspapers of the appropriate time period.)

Consulting other sources allows you to: (i) gain another perspective on the question you are researching, (ii) gain additional information, and (iii) verify the accuracy of details from other sources.

Keep your research information organized. Be sure to add jot notes for additional information. As you research, you may find new questions to answer. If this happens, you may be able to include these questions in your current research. If not, you may want to follow up on them after your main story has been completed.



2.43 Early trade routes
Medieval commerce stretched across many thousands of kilometres. This allowed the transport of goods such as silk, spices, and perfumes to Europe from Asia, and also facilitated the exchange of social, religious, and technological ideas. By the medieval period, sea routes began to reduce the importance of central Asian routes, but all were vulnerable to thieves, changeable weather, and the whims of rulers.

Some spices, such as pepper, were used to help mask the foul odour of decaying food, making it easier to eat.

For centuries, Western Europeans had traded with Asia to obtain resources such as silk and spices. During this time, an extensive network of trade routes developed between the two regions. One of the most-travelled routes became known as the Silk Road, which extended from the Far East through Central Asia to the Caspian, Black, and Mediterranean Seas. Ancient routes such as these allowed merchandise, music, art, and ideas to flow from Asia to Europe.

During the fifteenth century, however, the Ottoman Empire rose to power in Europe and the Middle East, which caused trade patterns to change. By 1453, Ottoman Turks had conquered the Byzantine Empire and seized its capital, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). The Ottoman Empire expanded in the coming years and soon extended its power into southeast Europe, north Africa, and the Middle East. The middle ground of the Silk Road fell under Ottoman control, which made trade between Western Europe and the Far East much more dangerous and difficult than ever before.

In response, Western European powers such as Portugal and Spain sought out alternate routes that could maintain their lucrative trade links with China and other Asian civilizations. Instead of travelling by land, Europe now focused on developing maritime routes. Advances in navigational, shipbuilding, and other technologies facilitated maritime exploration. In addition, Western Europe's population was expanding rapidly during this period, which created a growing demand for more food and other imports.

Various European powers now had the means and demand to establish an extensive maritime trade route with Asia. A competition soon emerged in Europe – with Spain and Portugal at the forefront – to find the fastest route to Asia. Portuguese fleets followed Africa's coast to India, while Spain sent Christoffa Corombo (Christopher Columbus) west* across the Atlantic Ocean. Around the same time, Zuan Caboto (John Cabot) also attempted a transatlantic voyage, with funding from England's King Henry VII. Caboto's plan, however, was to cross the North Atlantic, which he hoped would bring him to Asia in less time than Corombo's more southerly route. Both men were looking for Cathay (China) when they "stumbled" upon the Americas.

*Remember, Europeans did not know at this time that the Americas lay between western Europe and eastern Asia.

The Value of Fish

When Caboto sailed into waters near Newfoundland and Labrador, he was amazed at the sea teeming with codfish. While King Henry VII was probably disappointed that Caboto did not have spices with him on his return, he recognized the fact that fish was valuable. As news of this "discovery" spread, other European nations began visiting Newfoundland and Labrador's waters to exploit its resources. Early in the 1500s, Portuguese and French vessels began crossing the Atlantic annually to fish for the summer. Later, England and Spain joined in.

Fish in those days nearly always meant salt cod. The demand for saltfish was high for several reasons. Saltfish was an inexpensive source of protein. It had a long shelf life if thoroughly cured and, due to its light weight and small size, was easily transported. Also, saltfish could be stored for use through the winter when meat was scarce. These qualities made saltfish well-suited for crews on overseas voyages, armies on the march, and a growing urban population. In addition, saltfish was consumed by Catholics and some Protestants who maintained Catholic traditions on Fridays and during obligatory fast-days in Lent. Consequently an abundant supply of fish was important to most European countries, and they encouraged the growth of new fisheries.

The transatlantic fishery further helped the European economy by creating jobs for workers directly and indirectly involved in the harvesting of fish. Alongside the thousands of people who worked as fishers, there were many more who either made salt, or manufactured nets, hooks, barrels, and other goods associated with the catching, processing, and packaging of fish. Other workers found employment with merchant firms selling cod to domestic and foreign markets. In addition to its economic benefits, the migratory cod fishery also became attractive to the French and English governments as a means of training and recruiting skilled seamen for their navies. These navies were needed to protect shipping and trade, and fight in the various European conflicts, which often extended beyond European boundaries.

2.44 Main centres of fishing and whaling, 16th century
Based on information from the *Historical Atlas of Canada – From the Beginning to 1800, Vol. 1* by Cole R. Harris

2.45 *Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 8 August 1588* by Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, painted 1796, depicts the Battle of Gravelines
The Spanish fishery was much reduced by 1600, owing to wars with England and English attacks on the Spanish fleet. A Spanish Armada, attempting to invade England, was destroyed in 1588.

2.46 A very fanciful French illustration of d'Haussonville's capture of St. John's, June 27, 1762

1665	Dutch attack St. John's
1673	Dutch attack Placentia and Ferryland
1692	English fire on Placentia
1693	English fire on Placentia
1694	French attack Ferryland and St. John's
1696-7	French devastate English settlements on Avalon Peninsula
1702-4	French attack English settlements
1702-4	English attack French settlements
1705	French destroy St. John's
1706	English attack French settlements
1708	French take and burn St. John's
1709	English attack French fishing fleet
1762	French take St. John's, Carbonear Island, and Trinity
1762	English retake St. John's

A New Pattern Emerges

This time of exploration and change was marked by conflict within and between countries in Europe. Strong monarchies arose in some countries, which battled with other countries for power and prestige. The effects of European wars were also felt in Newfoundland and Labrador, as its location and its fisheries were important and worth fighting about. These conflicts at home and away affected the Newfoundland fishery by changing the balance of power between the countries involved – mainly England, France, and Spain.

It was, in fact, religious turmoil in France that first brought England into the Newfoundland fishery in a large way. Repeated civil wars in France between Catholics and Protestants from 1562 to 1598 disrupted the French fishery and gave English merchants an opportunity to sell fish in France. Similarly, by 1600, wars between Spain and England reduced the Spanish fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the demand for fish in Spain remained high. Consequently, Spain also became a market for fish caught by the English in the waters of Newfoundland and Labrador. By the beginning of the 1600s, this left England and France as the two major participants in the Newfoundland fishery.

The effects of European wars were also felt in Newfoundland and Labrador, as its location and its fisheries were important and worth fighting about.

Questions:

1. What innovations enabled Western Europeans to explore further in the late fifteenth century?
2. Why did European rulers fund voyages looking for new routes to Asia?
3. Why was the migratory fishery important to European countries? What was the most significant reason?
4. Although England and France knew of the discovery of the "New World" in the late 1490s, it would be over 100 years before either country took steps to encourage settlement. What might account for this?
5. Why did the peoples of the Americas not "discover" Europe?

COLONIALISM

Colonialism is the domination of one group of people by another, and is an ancient phenomenon, going back to at least 500 BCE in Greece. Spain and Portugal were the dominant colonizers of North and South America during the fifteenth century. However, the nature of colonialism changed dramatically during the sixteenth century, as technological advancements in navigation and shipbuilding allowed European powers to travel further than ever before. New and powerful ships could transport large numbers of people to far-off ports and maintain ties between colonies and the mother land. Instead of expanding into relatively nearby areas, European powers could send their colonists and armies overseas to places like the Americas.

England, France, and Holland had established overseas empires by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rivalry among the various European powers sparked a series of wars during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ultimately leaving Britain as the principal colonial power in North America by the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

In British colonialism, the main sponsors were usually merchants. As a result, the early British Empire developed as a trade network and involved the exploitation of resources with minimum government support for establishing colonies. While settlement struggled, however, overseas trade flourished and, by the end of the seventeenth century, the colonies became essential to Britain's economic well-being.

By then, Britain's colonial practices involved domination over foreign peoples and territories, the introduction of settlement in those territories, and the monopolization of trade with those territories. A network of communication was established that linked various parts of the British Empire with London as well as with each other. British settlements in North America were linked to their home ports through vast trade and communication networks. Colonizers – who included both settlers and traders – became conscious of their membership within a British Atlantic World.

CASE STUDY

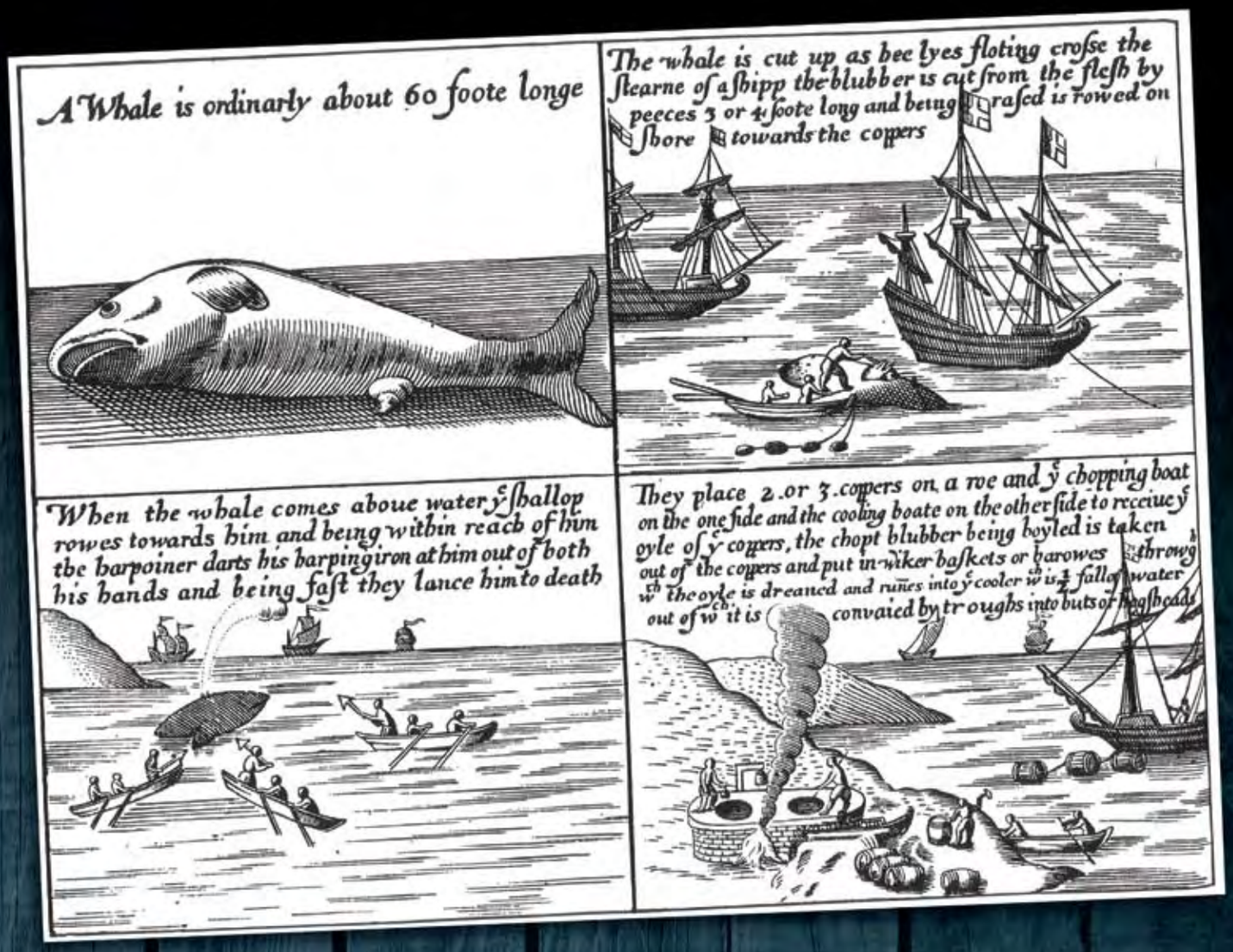
Basque Whaling

Although most European fishing fleets harvested cod from Newfoundland and Labrador waters, this was not always the case.

MIGRATORY BASQUE WHALERS FROM FRANCE AND SPAIN, WHO HAD previously hunted whales in their home waters, conducted a whaling industry at Labrador in the 1500s and early 1600s. They had heard of the large numbers of whales off Labrador from the French and Spanish fishing in Newfoundland's and Labrador's waters.

2.47 Rendering fat from blubber.

2.48 Model of a Basque whaler at Red Bay.



2.49 Illustration of 17th Century whaling methods
From John Churchill, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some now first printed from Original Manuscripts. Others Translated out of Foreign Languages, and now First Published in English. To Which are added some few that have formerly appeared in English, but do now for their Excellency and Scarceness deserve to be Reprinted. Volume IV (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704)*

The **Basques** began whaling at southern Labrador in the 1530s and took bowhead whales and right whales as they migrated through the Strait of Belle Isle. They used at least a dozen whaling sites on the Labrador coast, the best known of which is at Red Bay, the scene of extensive archaeological work. At its peak, in the mid-1500s, the whaling employed about 600 men and 15 ships per year.

The ships, as in the cod fishery, were used for transport. The whales were harpooned from small boats and then towed ashore. The blubber was cut from the whales and heated in large cauldrons which transformed it into oil. The oil was shipped back to Europe in barrels and was used for lighting, lubrication, and in manufacturing. The whales' **baleen**, also known as whalebone, had a variety of industrial uses.

It is unclear why Basque whaling ended. Foreign competition, pirates, conflict with Inuit, and troubles in Spain have been suggested as partial causes. A decline in the numbers of whales due to over-hunting was most likely a major factor. In any event, the Basque whaling industry was almost over by the early 1580s – by which time the ships were coming home only half full. However, a few ships continued to come to North America up to the 1630s to hunt whales.

Questions:

1. How would you support the statement that Red Bay was the first oil refinery in the province?
2. Today the right whale (including the bowhead) is an endangered species. How did Red Bay contribute to this classification? What can be done to ensure survival of this species?

TOPIC 2.5

The Migratory Fishery

How would you have spent your time on a boat travelling from Europe to Newfoundland for the migratory fishery?

Why do you think the fishers only fished for cod and not other species?

Introduction

Two European powers, France and England, dominated the Newfoundland and Labrador migratory cod fisheries at the start of the seventeenth century. Differences between the two nations' fisheries, however, reduced the risk of conflict during this period. Each worked from separate areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, and each processed cod in different ways. Both nations, however, fished from inshore areas as well as from offshore waters on the Grand Banks.

2.50 This copper engraving, done in 1719 by Allain Manesson Mallet, shows the French fishing on the Grand Banks.

la morue séche

(The French Fishery in Newfoundland)

The French fishery on the Grand Banks lasted most of the year. French ships would set sail for Newfoundland and Labrador as early as January in order to provide a supply of fish for Lent, and then make a second voyage in the summer. Once on the fishing grounds, these banking ships seldom came to shore except to shelter from storms. Fish were caught from platforms on the sides of ships using hooks and lines. The fish were preserved in heavy salt until they could be taken home.

While the French fished mainly on the banks, they also fished inshore. Initially they fished on the south coast, near the French capital at Plaisance (Placentia). Later the French began fishing along the north and west coasts of the island, which became known as the French Treaty Shore. The fish produced from these areas was dry cured and intended for markets in southern France and Spain. The boundaries of the French Treaty Shore changed over time and were the source of much conflict.

Preserving fish this way was sometimes called the "green fishery" because the fish were carried to market without drying. Green fish found a market in northern France.

A "barvel" was the traditional garment worn by early fishers. It was made of sheepskin with the wool facing inside. The outside was coated with tar. It was the predecessor of oil skins.

2.51

THE TREATY OF UTRECHT

Although the French migratory and resident fisheries prospered throughout the seventeenth century, they fell into decline during the early eighteenth century after a series of wars and treaties between France and England dramatically limited the nature and location of French activity on the island of Newfoundland.

The earliest restrictions followed the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713), in which England and its European allies forced France to withdraw from the Spanish Netherlands and the Spanish possessions it had seized in Italy. The Treaty of Utrecht helped end the war in 1713 and stipulated, among other things, that France surrender some of its North American territories to Great Britain. The treaty granted sovereignty of Newfoundland to England and forbade permanent French settlement of the island. It did, however, allow France to use a portion of the north coast, between Cape Bonavista and Pointe Riche, as a seasonal base for its fishery. French fishers were allowed to catch and dry fish in this area, known as the French or Treaty Shore, but had to leave once the fishing season ended in September.

Although France retained seasonal fishing rights to the coast between Cape Bonavista and Pointe Riche, its involvement in the fishery continued to decline. England, on the other hand, steadily increased the number of vessels it sent to the island each spring and ultimately became the foremost participant in the migratory fishery, as well as in the development of Newfoundland and Labrador's economic, social, and political future.

2.52 The Treaty of Utrecht (1713)
recognized English sovereignty over the island of Newfoundland. Under this agreement, the French agreed to leave Plaisance and move their fishing from the south coast to the new French Treaty Shore between Cape Bonavista and Pointe Riche.

2.53 A Newfoundland fishing station, c. 1690, by Gerard Edema
This Dutch artist visited Newfoundland in the 1690s. This painting is one of the earliest surviving illustrations of settlement on the Avalon Peninsula.

The English Inshore Fishery

The early English migratory fishery was mostly called the inshore fishery. Ships carried crews and equipment across the Atlantic. Once arrived, the ships were moored. Fishing was then conducted from small boats on fishing grounds close to the shore.

Although the shore fishery lasted only from June to August, preparations for the voyage began in winter. Ships were refitted while still in England and provisioned with food, fishing tackle, and clothing for the crews and later for any resident fishermen the merchant supplied. Initially crews were paid a share of the season's catch. However, by the eighteenth century, they were usually paid wages.

The ships sailed west by the end of March in order to reach Newfoundland and Labrador before the fishing season began. Too early an arrival might mean that the ice was still on the coast. Too late a departure might mean missing part of the fishing season, as well as finding the best landing places (or "**rooms**") taken, as these were allotted on a first-come basis. Unless the merchant financing the trip had previously left a winter crew to prepare for the season, the first tasks upon arrival were to repair and rebuild stages, flakes, and buildings, and then to acquire bait.

Once the cod struck inshore, following the capelin, there began a hectic fishing season, lasting until the end of August. Fishing was conducted by crews of three to five men using lines with baited hooks. Fish were landed daily to be cured by shore crews. Once landed, the shore crews headed, gutted, split, washed, lightly salted, and, when the weather was suitable, laid the fish to dry on flakes.

The inshore "dry" cure which used little salt fetched a better price than the more heavily salted cures because it was much preferred among the richer classes. It also better suited the English who, having no natural supply

This occurred in mid-June on the east coast.

2.55

The Maner of Catching and makeing drie fishe in Newland.

This document was written in 1676 by John Downing, a prominent planter of Newfoundland. At the time of its writing, he lived in St. John's.

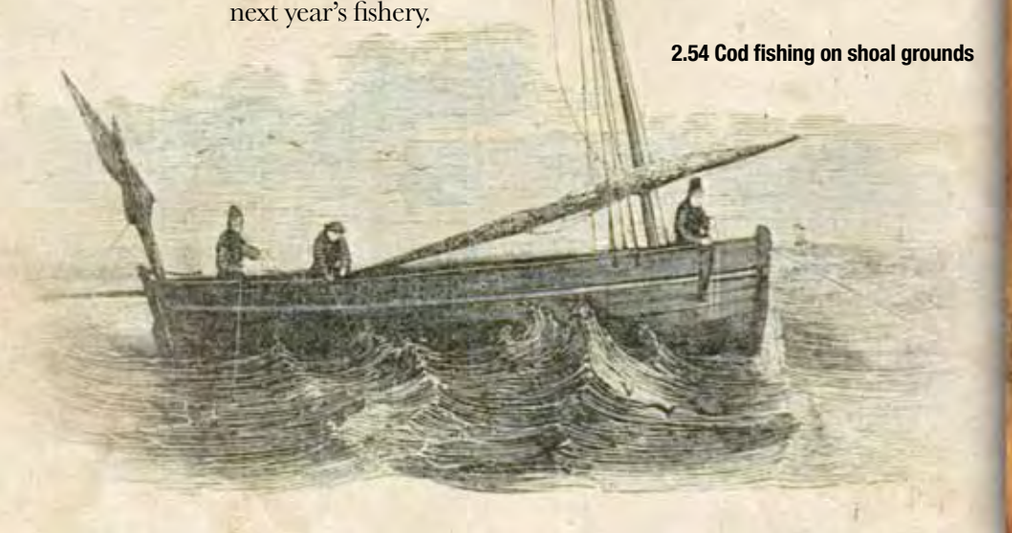
In Each boate goes 3 men with foresayle and maynesayle in both 30 yards of Canvace., 1 Roade of 60 fathom & oares made in the Countrey.

A drift of[f] the shoare the boates goe for to catch herrings with 4 or 5 netts fastened to the boats sterne post[.] there netts must be in the water to doe well before sunn sett and Remaine if herrings Enough be not taken[,] Stormes and Wind not hindering[,] till Sunn riseing[.] Some nights by reason of winds and current to prevent driveing on shoare or of[f] to[o] farr from shoare they hall there netts tenn times in a night Rowing to gett againe the shoare or to gett of[f] from it many times herrings being scarce they drive Everie night

Each boates crewe from Sunday night to Saturday night resting onlie in ther beds onlie Saturday night Some rest not it: the dayes Except Sundayes they atend Cod Catching[.] this toils is preformed in St. Johns and severall other harbors if the caplein Taken in saynes[.] ... Each fisher boate most dayes bringing in one thousand fishe per daye[.] …

of salt at home, had to acquire it from other countries. Most of the fish was carried to markets in southern Europe and Iberia (Spain and Portugal) by cargo ships called "sacks," which often picked up salt, fruits, and wines for the English markets. The first ships to reach market got the best price. Once the fish was sold, the ships returned to their home ports to be readied for the next year's fishery.

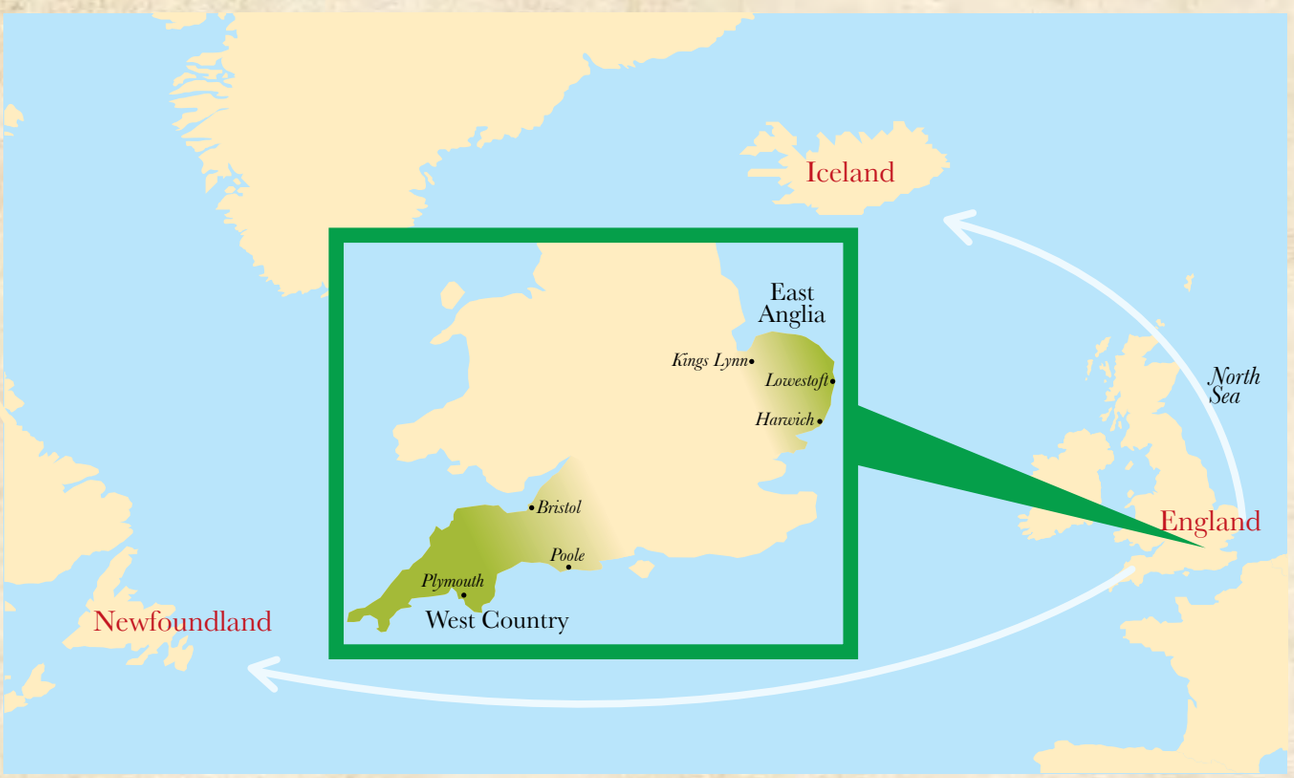
2.54 Cod fishing on shoal grounds



English Fisheries: Iceland and Newfoundland

Being on an island, England always looked to the sea as a source of food. To augment the local fishery, fishers from the east coast of England had engaged in a migratory fishery near Iceland since the fifteenth century. When the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery opened up, English merchants wanted to exploit those cod stocks as well.

The pattern of the Icelandic migratory fishery also worked for the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the situation of the seaports in southwest England, in the area known as the West Country, better suited the trip across the Atlantic than the seaports along the east coast that engaged in the Icelandic fishery. Consequently, the economy of these western seaports increased.



2.56 English fisheries: Iceland and Newfoundland

When the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery opened up, English merchants wanted to exploit those cod stocks as well.

Part of the Global Economy

Newfoundland fish formed part of a triangle of trade involving England, southern Europe, and the Americas. England traded food and clothing with Spain in exchange for salt. This salt, vital to the fishery, was then shipped to Newfoundland to be used in making fish. Most Newfoundland cod produced by the English was usually transported directly to markets in mainland Europe, in which the third leg was a voyage home with Mediterranean goods (fruit, wine, olive oil).

The West Indies produced mainly sugar and its products, rum and molasses, with slave labour. Poorly cured saltfish which fetched a low price in Europe was sold to plantation owners in the West Indies for feeding slaves. They paid for this with West Indian products.

New England colonies played a very important role in the Newfoundland fishery and trade from the early seventeenth century (1620s) until the American Revolution in 1775. Traders from such places as Boston, Salem, Providence, and Philadelphia brought West Indian products, food (especially flour), livestock, and lumber, and took the poorer quality saltfish (which came to be known as West Indian cure) to be sold in places such as Jamaica and Barbados.

*Not much saltfish went to England – most went directly to markets in southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

2.57 Selected trade routes of the North Atlantic, 17th and 18th centuries

Experiencing The Arts

It is time to construct your story, being mindful of the ideas presented in the storytelling section of this book. To do this, you will need to sift through your information. You may find you have some difficult decisions to make, such as:

- what to do with conflicting or contradictory information
- what to do if you do not have enough information
- how to deal with sensitive or embarrassing information

There are several ways to deal with these issues. One way is to consult an individual whom you feel has good judgment on these types of decisions. Another is to put yourself in the place of the subject of your story. If someone was talking about you, what would you want him or her to say? Although it is usually okay to have some good-natured humour in your story, you should avoid disrespectful or belittling comments.

Once you have finalized your story, share it with close family or friends as part of the private tradition of storytelling.

2.58 Captain Peter Easton
This once-loyal English seaman who turned to piracy in Newfoundland and Labrador waters in 1612, is said to have done over £20 000 of damage to the fishing fleets here. He attacked English and foreign ships alike. Easton's headquarters were in Harbour Grace, but his raids also took him to St. John's and Ferryland. Picture of Easton from a detail of a painting by Newfoundland and Labrador artist Odell Archibald.

The Economics of the Fishery

When it went well, a fishing voyage from Europe to Newfoundland earned great profits for the ship's owner and crew. This prospect was what encouraged merchants to take great risks of sending men and supplies such a long distance year after year.

Sir Richard Whitbourne in 1622 estimated that a ship of 100 tons, with a crew of 40, using eight small boats, each manned by three men, could catch and make 2000 quintals of dry fish and perhaps 100 quintals of green fish. The profits from this would pay for the vessel, the wages of the fishermen, their food and other provisions, and leave the owner with a very large profit.

The most successful merchants became wealthy – some owning 15 to 20 ships and large properties. However, bankruptcies were also frequent because of the risks involved in the trade. To prepare for the voyage, merchants had to spend large sums of money that they could not recoup until the fish were sold. Delays in selling were frequent and could spell ruin for merchants. Ships might be wrecked, or seized by pirates or enemy ships in wartime. Markets could be closed by war or outbreaks of disease. Fish might be scarce in the summer, or poor weather might make curing difficult.

On top of this, exchange rates could change abruptly. This could turn a potentially profitable voyage into a losing one while the ships were still on the high seas. One historian noted: "The merchants lived from season to season in a state of incessant panic, so their well known air of pessimism was surely not surprising." A contemporary in the 1790s described them as "a very discontented body of men."

2.59 The cod fishery promised rich rewards for investors, but was also a risky business.
It was generally accepted that fishing voyages to Newfoundland and Labrador claimed the life of one man in 50.

Painting of *The Cod Fishery* (1754)
Detail of an oil painting by A. Louis Garneray, 1832

Translation of a shipping company act:

On this day of March 18, 1735, appearing before the Lieutenant-General is Nicollas Gallien, Sieur de Baspré, a merchant residing in this city who is part owner of Le Marc, a new vessel from Saint-Malo of about 205 tons that he is outfitting and sending to Grande-Baye [the coast of Labrador] under the command of Sieur de Cerisier Lepelley. The party appearing today has named the following people as partners:

Sieur Quinette de Préville for two thirty-seconds	2/32
Sieur de Cerisier Lepeley for one thirty-second	1/32
Sieur Hernopoue two thirty-seconds	2/32
Sieur Étienne Ribart one thirty-second	1/32
Jeanne du Val two thirty-seconds	2/32
Sieur de la Cité Roce one thirty-second	1/32

2.60 Excerpt from the register of acts of new companies and statement of interest in ships.
This illustrates how multiple investors could help share the risks associated with the migratory fishery.

Risk Management

There were some steps that merchants could take to reduce risks. One was to exercise strict supervision – fishing masters had a reputation for being hard drivers. Another was to employ relatives in senior positions, such as captains and overseers, as they could be trusted to look after the merchants' interests. Risks could also be shared with the crew by paying them a share of the value of the fish they caught instead of a set wage.

Eventually it became difficult to find men who were willing to work in the fishery without guaranteed payment. After 1700, most English ships paid wages to their crews.

Another way for merchants to minimize risks emerged during this time period. Merchants began a practice of outfitting the small resident population with supplies on credit and accepted their fish as payment after the season had ended. The advantage to the merchant was that he could acquire a supply of fish without the expense of outfitting his own crews.

2.61 A sketch by Edward Barlow of the sack ship *Real Friendship* in 1668.
Barlow was a mariner aboard this vessel on a voyage from London to Tenerife. The following year, while loading fish in Newfoundland and Labrador, the vessel caught fire and was lost.

From Edward Barlow, *Barlow's Journal of His Life at Sea in King's Ships, East & West Indiamen & Other Merchantmen from 1659 to 1703.*

Byeboat-keepers

A third class of fisherman which, arose late in the 1600s and became most numerous in the 1700s was called **byeboat-keepers**. They were an independent group of fishermen between those who belonged to the fishing ships and inhabitants, or planters. Byeboat-keepers came as passangers on cargo sack ships and fished on their own account. They left their boats "bye" in the winter when they went home. They were "middle class" adventurers and were sometimes called "yeomen" of the fishery.

Byeboat-keepers generally sold their fish to sack ships that carried fish from the shore fishery back to Europe. The advantages of this system were that the byeboat-keeper avoided the cost of buying a ship, found it easier to get the small crews required, and could produce fish more cheaply.

Frequently, byeboat-keepers hired men to overwinter to protect their gear. Initially, those who did overwinter seldom remained for more than one or two seasons. However, later in the 1700s this practice contributed to the emergence of permanent settlement, when they brought out their wives and children.

2.62 A painting of King Charles I (1636) by Antoon van Dyck. King Charles passed the first legislation to apply British law to all of Newfoundland.

Governing the Fishery and the Colony 1600-1815

Before Newfoundland began to be settled in the early 1600s, the migratory fishery was governed only by such customs and rules as the fishermen themselves developed. When John Guy settled Cupids in 1610, he was ordered by King James I not to interfere with the migratory fishermen, but was also given authority to govern Newfoundland under English law. Other colonizers such as Lord Baltimore and Sir David Kirke were also commanded to respect the traditional rights of the fishermen who came every summer, but they also had authority to punish anyone who broke laws or committed crimes.

"Many men yeerely … unlawfully convey away other man's fishing boats … take away other men's salt … rip and take away time and rayles (rails) from stages …"

– Captain Richard Whitbourne from Exmouth, Devon reporting on the state of anarchy in the Newfoundland fishery in 1615

Meanwhile, migratory fishers objected to settlement and being governed by rules and regulations of local authorities. They argued that the fishery should be free and open, and that settled government was too expensive and would interfere with their rights.

When the early colonies failed to prosper, the migratory fishermen persuaded King Charles I and the Privy Council (a group who advised the King) to grant them a charter which would protect them. The *Western* ***Charter***, passed in 1634, recorded the traditions and customs which had developed with the fishery. These now became law. This was the first ruling to put all Newfoundland and Labrador under English law. It guaranteed the right of the English to fish in Newfoundland and Labrador waters and formalized the traditional position of fishing admiral as decision maker.

King William's Act (1699) reaffirmed the *Western Charter*, but expanded it with new clauses. This act formed the basis of Newfoundland and Labrador's written law until the late eighteenth century. One of the most important clauses was the right for settlers to take land not used by migratory fishermen and to hold it as private property. The act confirmed the power of the fishing admirals, and also authorized the practice whereby commanders of naval warships stationed at Newfoundland and Labrador acted as appeal judges, setting the stage for the entrenchment of naval government in Newfoundland and Labrador.

2.63 In their day, fishing admirals sometimes had the reputation of being corrupt and of being more interested in their own fishing activities than justice. This image – a back-lashing from a cat-o'-nine-tails and typical of punishment in the 1700s – is one artist's idea of punishment carried out by a fishing admiral. Archival evidence, however, does not support the idea that this type of justice was common practice by fishing admirals.

The legal system that governed Newfoundland and Labrador before 1815 was relatively stable and effective. A customary system of governance that met the needs of those in power was developed. Starting in 1729, the commodore of the naval squadron served as **governor** of the region for the summer and appointed civilian justices to settle criminal matters in the winter after his departure. Newfoundland and Labrador, therefore, had a form of dual authority – naval and civil. Fishing admirals contested the authority of the governor, but by 1750 they were no longer an independent force. Naval government lasted for almost a century, but as the resident population of Newfoundland and Labrador rose during the 1700s, the need for increased civil government was felt.

Questions:

1. Using a Venn diagram, compare the French, English, and Basque fisheries.

2. The migratory fishery was a risky venture.
   a. What were the risks for merchants?
   b. What were the risks for fishers?
   c. Given the risks for both merchants and fishers, why did both parties continue this practice?

CASE STUDY

Primary Source: : The Western Charter (1634)

2.64

(1634)

Western Charter

Charles by the grace of God Kinge of England Scotland ffraunce and Ireland Defendor of the faith. To all to whome these prtes shall come Greetinge Whereas the Region of Country called Newfoundland hath beene acquired to the Dominion of our Progenitors which wee hould and our people have many Yeares resorted to those partes where, and in the Coastes adioyninge, they imployed themselves in fishing whereby a greate number of our people have been set on worke, and the Navigation, and Marriners of our Realme hath ben much increased, AND our Subjects resorting thither on by the other,* [sic] and the Natives of those partes, were orderlie and gentilie intreated* [sic] vntill of late some of our Subjectes of the Realme of England plantinge themselves in that Country, and there residinge, and inhabitinge, vpon conceipt, that for wronge or Iniuries done there, either on the Shoare, or in the Sea adioyninge, they cannot be here impeached, and the rather for that wee, or our Progenitors have not hithervnto given lawes to the Inhabitantes there; and by that example our Subjectes resortinge thither iniure one another, and vse all manner of excesse, to the greate hinderance of the voyage, and comon damage of this Realme ffor preventinge such inconveniencies hereafter, wee doe hereby declare in what manner our people in Newfoundland, and vpon the Sea adioyninge, and the Bayes, Creekes, or freshe Rivers there shalbe guided and governed Doe make and ordeyne the lawes followings in the thinge after specified, comaundinge that the same bee obeyed and put in execution.

First if any man on the land there shall kill another, or if any shall secretly or forceablie steale the goodes of any other to the value of fforty shillinges, hee shalbe forthwith apprehended and arrested, detayned and brought Prisoner into England, and the cryme committed by him, shalbe made knowne to the Earle Marshall of England for the tyme beinge to whom the deliquent shalbe delivered as Prisoner, And the said Earle Marshall shall take Cognizance of the cause, And if hee shall finde by the Testimonie of two witnesses or more that the partie had killed a man not beinge at that tyme first assaulted, by the party slayne, or that the killing were by misadventure, or had stolen such goodes, the deliquent shall suffer paine of death, and all the company shall endeavor to apprhend such malefactors.

Secondly, That noe Ballast, Prestones, or any thinge els hurtefull to the Harbours bee throen out, to the preiudice of the said Harbours, but that it bee carried ashoare, and layed where it may not doe annoyance.

Thirdly That noe person whatsoever either ffishermen or Inhabitantes doe destroy, deface, or any way worke any spoyle or detriment to any Stage Cooke-roome, fflakes, Spikes, Nayles or any thinge else, that belongeth to the States whatsoever, either at the ende of the voyage when he hath done and is to departe the Country, or to any such Stages as he shall fall w'hall at his cominge into the Country, but that hee or they content themselves with such Stage or Stages only as shalbe needeful for them, And that for the repayringe of such Stages as hee or they take, they shall fetch Tymber out of the Woodes, and not to doe it with the ruininge, or tearinge downe of other Stages.

Fowerthly that accordinge to the auncient custom everie Shipp or ffisher that first entreth a Harbour in behalf of the shipp, bee Admirall of the said Harbour wherein for the time beinge hee shall reserve only so much Beach and fflakes or both as is needefull for the number of Boates that he shall vse with an overplus only for one Boate more then hee needeth as a priviledge for his first cominge, And that everie Shipp cominge after, content himselfe with what hee shall have necessarie vse for, without keepinge or deteyninge any more, to the prejudice of others

next cominge, And that any that are possessed of severall places in severall Harbours with intent to keepe them all before they can resolve upon which of them to choose, shalbe bound to resolve, and send advise to such after comers in those places as expect his resolucon, And that within forty eight howers if the weather so serve, that the said after comers may likewise choose their places, and so none receiue p'iudice by others delayes.

Fiftly,* [sic] That noe person cut out, deface, or anyway alter or change the markes of any Boates or Trayne fattes whereby to defraud the right owners, and that noe person convert to his owne vse the said Boates or Traynfattes so belonginge to others w'hout their consentes, nor remove nor take them from the places where they bee left by the Owners, Escept in case of necessitie, And then to give notice thereof to the Admirall, and others whereby the right owners may knowe what is become of them.

Sixtly * [sic] That noe person doe diminish, take away, purloine, or steale any of the fishe on Trayne, or Salt which is put in Caskes, Travne fattes or Cooke-rome*[sic] or other house in any of the Harbours of fishinge places of the country, or any other provision
belongings to the fishinge trade, or the Shippes.

Seaventhly That noe person set fire in any of the woodes of the Country or worke any detriment or destruction to the same, by Ryndings of the Trees, either for the seelinge of Shippes, houldes, or for Roomes on Shoare, or for any other vses, Except for the coverings of the Roofes for Cookeroomes to dresse their meate in, and those Roomes not to extend above sixteene foote in length at the most.

Eightlie, * [sic] That noe man cast Anchor or ought else hurtfull, wch may breede annoyance, or hinder the haleinge of Seanes * [sic] for baite in places accustomed therevnto.

Nynthlie, That noe p'son robb the Nettes of others out of any drifte boate, or drover for baite by night, nor take away any baite out of their fishing boates by their Shipps sides, nor robb or steale any of their Nettes, or anie parte thereof.

Tenthly That noe person doe set vp any Taverne for sellinge of wyne Beere, or stronge waters Cyder or Tobacco, to entertayne the fishermen, because it is found that by such meanes they are debauched, neglectinge thar labors and poore illgoverned men not only spend most part of their shares before they come home, vpon wch the life and maintenance of their wife and Children depende but are likewise hurtfull in divers other waies, as by neglectinge and makinge themselves vnfit for their labour by purloyninge and stealinge from their owners, and by makinge vnlawfull shiftes to supply their disorders and which disorders they frequently followe since those occons have presented themselves.

Lastly That upon the Sondaies the Company assemble in meete places and have devine service to bee said by some of the Masters of the Shippes or some others, which prayers shalbe such as are in the Booke of Comon Prayer. And because that speedie punishment may bee inflicted vpon the Offendors against those lawes and Constitucons, Wee doe ordaine, that everie of the Maiors of Southampton Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, Lyme, Plymouth, Dartmouth, Eastlowe, ffoye, and Barnestaple for the tyme beinge may take cognizans of all complayntes, made by any offender against anie of these Ordinances vpon the land, and by oath of witnesses examine the truth thereof, award amendes to the parties greeved, and punishe the delinquentes by fine imprisonment, or either of them, and of their goodes found in the partes of Newfoundland, or in the Sea, cause satisfaction thereof to bee made by warrantee vnder their handes and Seales. And the Viceadmiralles in our Countries of Southampton, Dorsett, Devon and Dornewall vpon complaints made of any of the premisses committed vpon the Sea shall speedily and effectually proceeds against the Offendors.

Also wee will and ordeyne, that these lawes and ordinances shall stand in force, and be put in due execution, vntill wee shall other-wise provide and ordaine. And wee doe require the Admirall in everie harbour in this next Season ensuinge callings together, such as shalbee in that Harborough* [sic] publiquelie to proclayme these presentes, And that they also pro-clayme the same on the Shore.

Question:

The migratory fishery was just over 100 years old when the *Western Charter* was introduced. The Charter provided a basic set of laws to help manage fishing activity. What types of issues did this legislation address?

TOPIC 2.6

Why not settle here?

How do you think it would have felt to winter in Newfoundland and Labrador for the first time?

Would you consider going to an unknown, unexplored place? Why or why not?

Introduction

Although Europeans had been coming to Newfoundland and Labrador to fish since the early 1500s, year-round governance and large-scale settlement of the colony were slow to take place. It was not until 1729 that Britain posted winter magistrates on the island and not until the late 1700s (about 300 years after the start of the migratory fishery) that a European resident population of any size developed. Why was this so?

The short answer is that it wasn't necessary to set up a settled colony to run a summer fishery. Also, there was little work here for people in the winter. While there was some speculation that there were other resources to be exploited in Newfoundland and Labrador, these industries had yet to be established. Economically, it made more sense for fishers to go back to England and France to find other sources of employment during the fishing off-season than to settle here. This established annual migrations as a pattern of living for many people for several centuries.

During this time period, many European countries "conquered" territories throughout the world. Typically, they would take the natural resources of the area and use them for their own benefit, often at the expense of the inhabitants. This same pattern occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador. Consequently, there was little "accumulation of capital" here – the wealth derived from the resources of Newfoundland and Labrador was transferred to the mother countries, leaving little behind with which to build infrastructure.

2.65 Although Newfoundland and Labrador was little more than a seasonal fishing station in the 1500s and 1600s, a few European family names date to this time period.

EUROPEAN

Names in Newfoundland dating before 1700

From *Family Names from the Island of Newfoundland*, by E.R. Seary

Adams
Andrews
Atkins

Badcock
Bailey
Baker
Batten
Boone
Bradley
Burt
Butler
Butt

Caines
Carter
Cole
Collins
Cooke
Corbin
Cotton
Cox
Crewes
Curtis

Davies
Davis
Dawe
Downing

Earl
Edwards
Elliott
England
Evans

Feild
Fillier
Ford
French

Gabriel
Garland
Genge
Gifford
Godfrey
Good
Gregory
Guy

Hefford
Hibbs
Hill
Hinds
Holloway
Holwell
Hopen
Hopkins
Horton
Howard
Hunt

Jewer
Johnson

Keyes
King
Kirk
Knight

Land
Lee

Maddox
Mahon
Marshall
Martin
Matthews
May
Miller
Moores
Mugford

Newell
Newman

Parsons
Pearce
Pearcey
Pollard
Poole
Powell
Pynn

Robbins
Roberts
Rolands

Sergeant
Shambler
Smith
Snow
Spingle
Stephens
Stone
Swain

Talbot
Tavernor
Taylor
Thistle
Thoms
Tilley
Tucker

Wallis
Warren
Webb
Welshman
Windsor

Yard

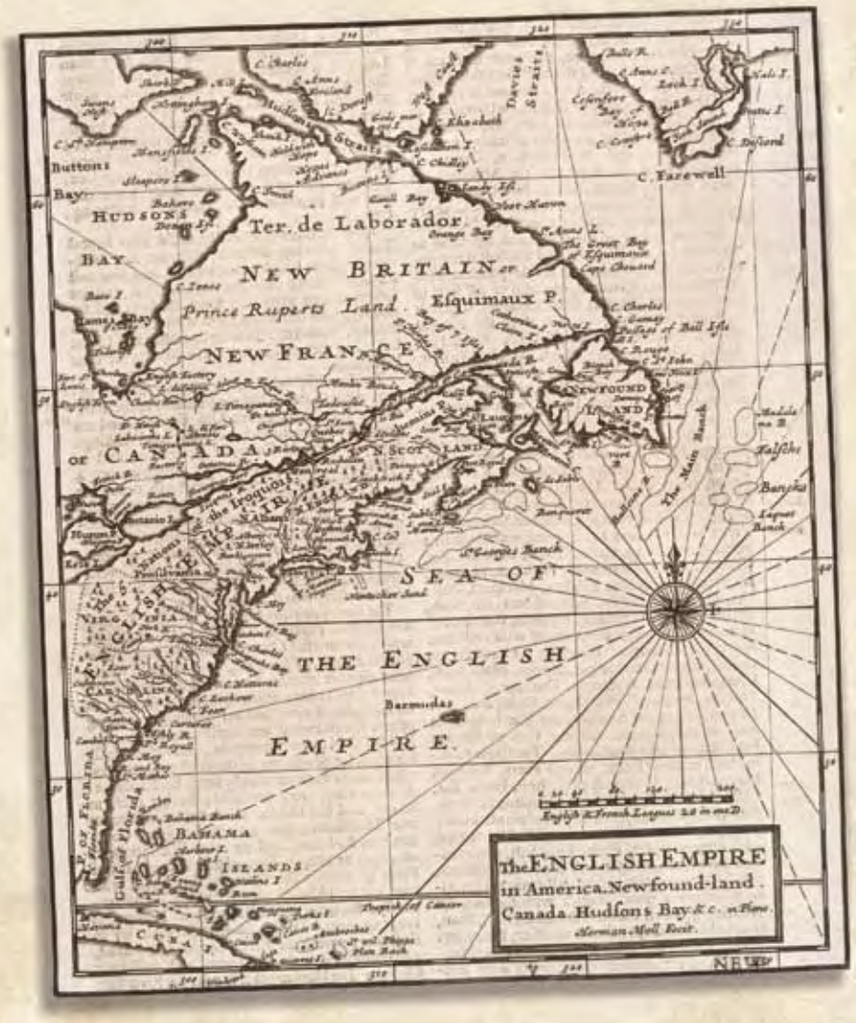
"The island of Newfoundland has been considered, in all former times, as a great ship moored near the Banks during the fishing season, for the convenience of the English fishery …"

– Comment made by British politician, William Knox, in 1793

Experiencing The Arts

Learn about other stories that are part of our tradition on page 650 as you read the stories written by storyteller Ted Russell.

2.66 English ship
An ocean-going vessel, likely similar to other English ships which visited Newfoundland during the 16th century.



2.67 The colonial powers saw the "New World" as territory to exploit for the benefit of the mother countries.
This map entitled *The English Empire in America, Newfoundland, Canada, Hudson's Bay &c in Plans* was created by Herman Moll in 1701.

The MYTH OF ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT

Following the collapse of the early formal colonies, the English government discouraged settlement, but did not make it illegal (except for 1676). The main opponents of settlement were merchants in the west of England, who argued for freedom in the fishery. Ironically, it was merchants who also encouraged settlement, not by what they said but by what they did. During the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, some merchants began to be suppliers to residents. They brought them supplies, which they gave on credit, and took the settlers' fish and products as payment.

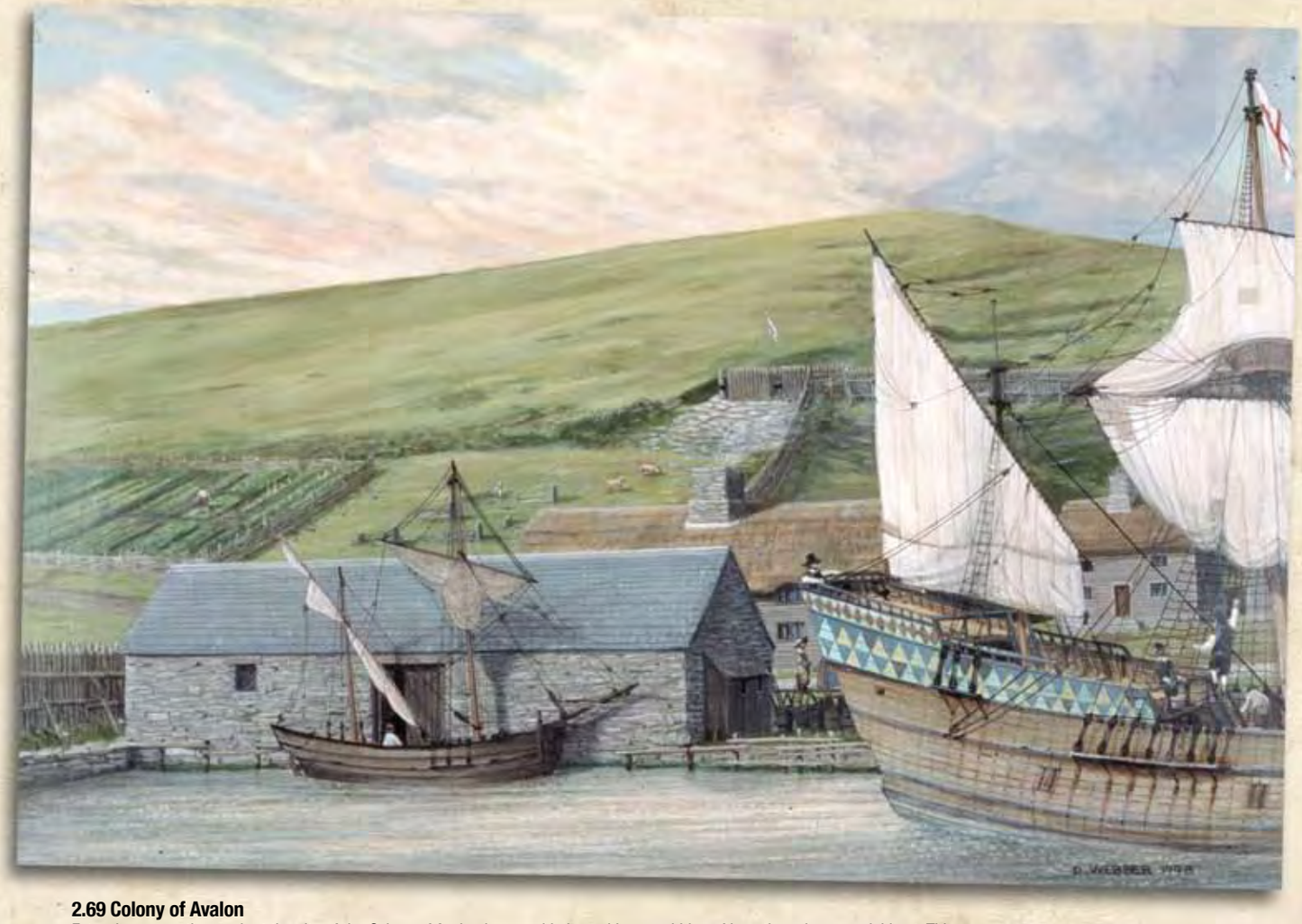
Although historical records do not support this interpretation, the myth has become part of what most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been taught about their own past. Historians now point out that merchants realized there was a profit to be made transporting fishers to Newfoundland and Labrador and selling them supplies when they stayed. The English government also realized English settlers helped keep the French out of the area. However, it would take until the late 1700s before economic factors favoured widespread permanent settlement in the colony.

2.68 Colleen Lynch *Island* sculpture

Planters

During the 1600s some migratory fishing masters began to leave behind servants to protect fishing properties during the winter months. More importantly, some boatkeepers, often called planters or inhabitants, brought their wives and children to settle. The planters hired servants to work in the fishery in much the same way as the byeboat-keepers. Through this process of voluntary settlement, most places acquired a year-round or permanent population.

While it is impossible to know exactly when many places were first occupied by many **planters**, the first detailed census taken in 1675 shows that 1655 inhabitants were living in 30 settlements between Cape de Razo (Cape Race) and Cape Bonavista. The largest places were St. John's and Bonavista. The great majority of these individuals were young, single males – servants to the planters. The planters were the owners of properties and boats. A few were women.



2.69 Colony of Avalon
Extensive excavation work at the site of the Colony of Avalon has provided us with a good idea of how the colony was laid out. This painting by artist David Webber shows the Avalon waterfront with a stone sea wall bordering the harbour and a large warehouse.

Sponsored Settlement

In addition to the planters' informal settlement patterns were the organized attempts of various English trading companies and other businesses to plant colonies on the island of Newfoundland. By doing so, the companies hoped to further develop and profit from local resources. This practice grew in popularity after 1604, when England ended its war with Spain and increased its investments and activities overseas.

The English sponsored colonies on the Avalon Peninsula, of which the best known are John Guy's **charter colony** at Cupids (established 1610) and Lord Baltimore's **proprietary** Colony of Avalon at Ferryland (established 1621). Although these investments failed, **sponsored settlement** did contribute to permanent settlement in Newfoundland and Labrador. Ferryland has been continuously inhabited since 1621, except for a few months after the French raid of 1696; Cupids has had an English presence since 1610, although it may have been only seasonally occupied for a few years in the late seventeenth century.

The French also had a royal colony in Newfoundland and Labrador – the garrison-town of Plaisance (Placentia), founded by King Louis XIV. While this colony failed to make profits, it was continuously occupied by the French from 1662 to 1713, when the Treaty of Utrecht no longer allowed the French to build anywhere on the island.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

PERSPECTIVE

The concept of perspective centres on how people view an event, idea, issue, or trend. The challenge is to suspend one's own frame of reference and instead view the matter at hand in terms of other points of view. The event of European settlement is an excellent example.

Europeans mistook the coastal lands used by the Beothuks as empty, and migratory fishers felt free to leave fishing premises unprotected at the end of the fishing season. From the Beothuk perspective, they could gather from abandoned fishing premises each winter the metal goods that made their lives easier. The Beothuks did not see the premises as private property but rather as something abandoned and therefore free to take … although their scavenging eventually earned them a reputation as thieves.

– Sean Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*

2.70 An excerpt from Sketch I by Shanawdithit (the last known Beothuk) This depicts "Captain Buchan's visit to the Red Indians in 1810-11, when the two marines were killed."

Questions:

How should we view this experience? Were Europeans moving into an "empty" land? Or did they not consider Aboriginal people as legitimate residents? Did Beothuk really perceive items left behind as "abandoned" or did they have a different concept of private property? What would we have to know about European and Beothuk values at that point in history in order to answer these questions?

Questions:

1. What would be some of the challenges faced by English planters, colonists or others (such as the French military) who overwintered on the island of Newfoundland in the seventeenth century? Which of these challenges might be the most difficult to address?

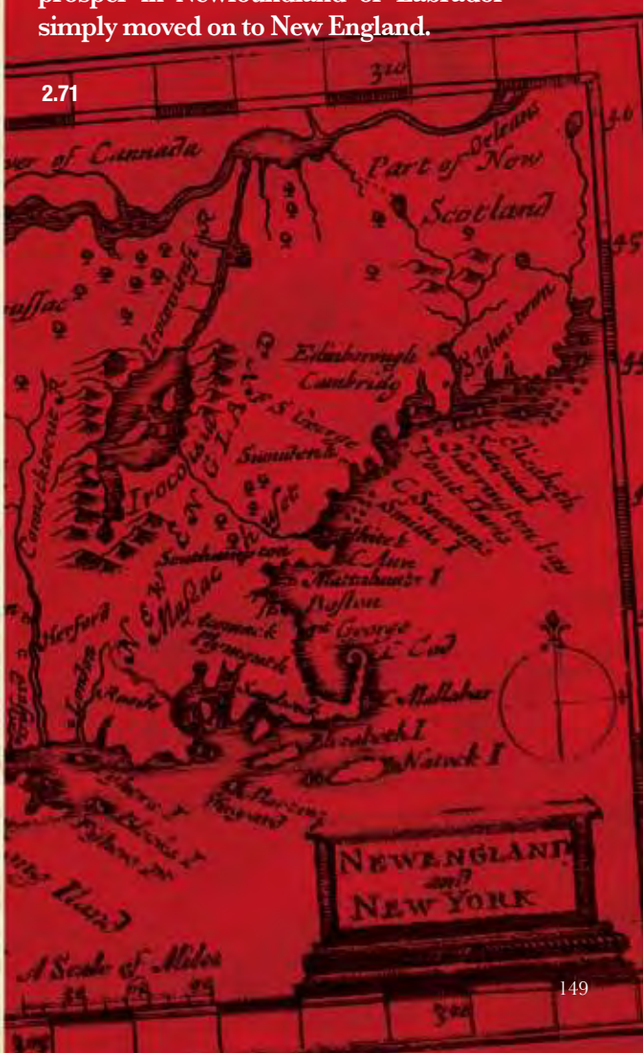
2. By the mid-1700s, there was very little permanent settlement by Europeans in Newfoundland and Labrador. What factors accounted for this? Which factor might have been the most significant?

3. Today, despite risks and hardship, many people choose to work in frontier regions. What factors encourage people to do this? Would any of these reasons be similar for those who worked in the migratory fishery during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries? Explain.

The NEW ENGLAND CONNECTION

In order to make their return voyage cheaper, occasionally fishing captains abandoned the fishers they had brought over to Newfoundland and Labrador. The majority of abandoned fishers moved on to New England. This began a long association between Newfoundland and Labrador and New England. The West Country merchants who founded the English Newfoundland fishery were also active in fishing off New England. From the late 1600s to the American Revolution in 1776, New England became a major supplier of food, livestock, and rum to Newfoundland and Labrador. New England also became a destination for later generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Records as early as 1701 show that many of those who did not prosper in Newfoundland or Labrador simply moved on to New England.

2.71



From Moll's map, about 1710.—B.M. K., 118-25. **2.72**

TOPIC 2.7

Changing Lifestyles

What might life have been like for migratory fishers while working in Newfoundland and Labrador?

What is similar and different for migratory workers today?

Introduction

Until the late eighteenth century, settlements were very different from those which developed later. They were essentially seasonal fishing stations (or work camps) occupied mainly by young, single men who were there only for the summer (although some overwintered with planters). The few planters who did live here tended to maintain links with their families in England or Ireland. In many respects the English and French areas were similar in their demographic patterns, except that after 1713 the French were permitted to reside only in St. Pierre.

Fishing Servants

Little is known about the life of visiting fishing servants, although it is likely that it was laborious. The fishing season was short and intense, and the best use had to be made of it. Servants were forced to work long hours with little time to sleep or rest. Those who worked for merchants often lived in barracks (called cookrooms) on their employers' premises. They were paid a small wage and given their keep. Those who worked for planters and byeboat-keepers usually boarded with their employers, sleeping in the lofts of stages or outbuildings.

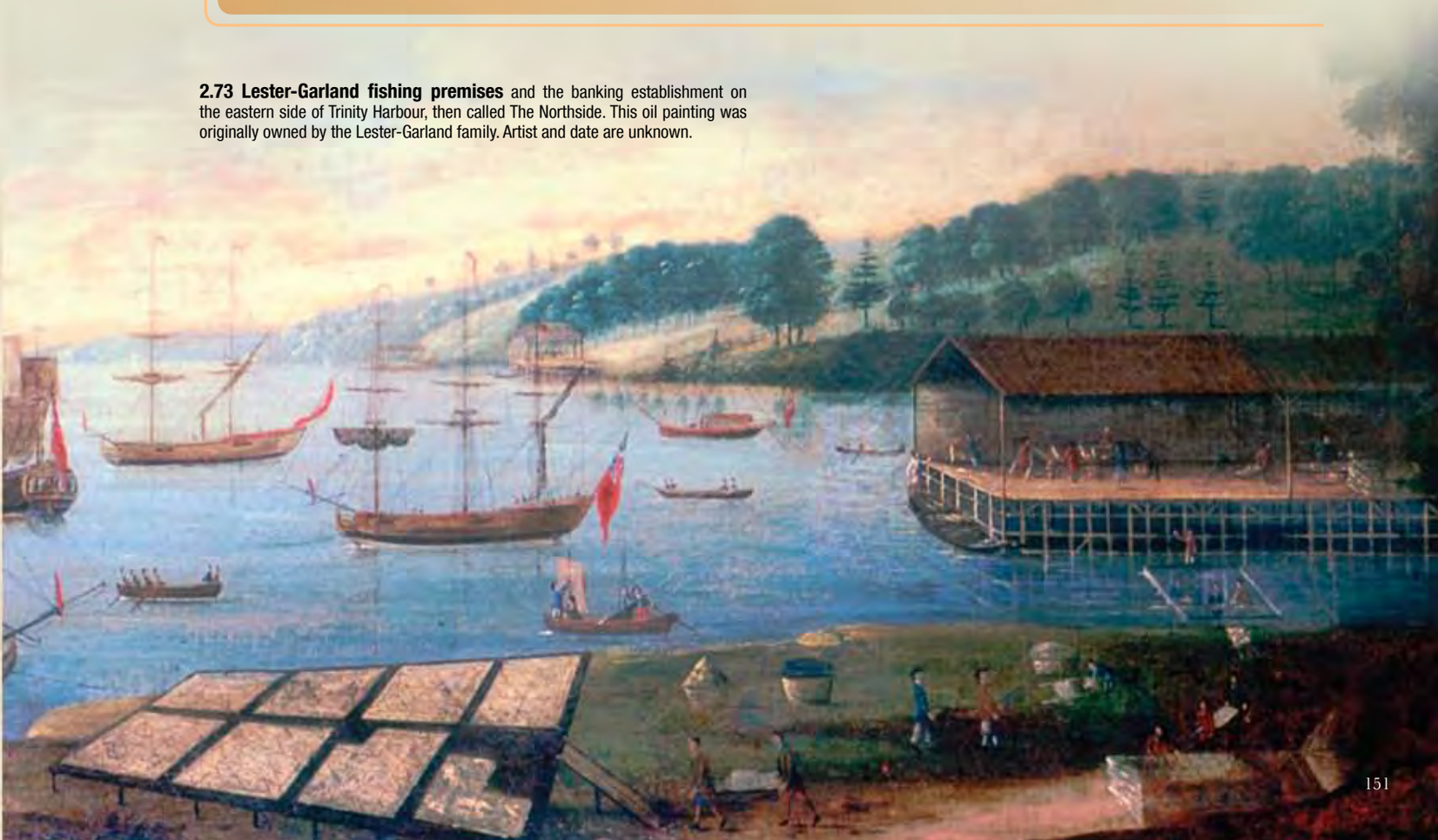
When they were at Newfoundland and Labrador, the migratory fishers' lives revolved around their occupation. Workers spent most of their waking hours catching and curing fish, which left them with little leisure time. Immediately after arriving in the spring or early summer, workers had to first spend much time and energy cutting timber and building the infrastructure of the fishery – stages, flakes, cookrooms, and the like. After the construction phase, fishing servants spent the remainder of the season catching cod and processing it for sale. Workers rowed to fishing grounds in small open boats early each morning and returned to shore when their vessels were filled with cod. Once fishers unloaded their catch onto the stage, members of the shore crew processed it. Headers removed the cod's head and guts, splitters cut out the backbone, and salters covered the fish with salt for curing – a process that could take weeks.

New Opportunities

As settlement expanded, settlers found opportunities for new economic activities. In the 1670s some settlers in Bonavista were involved in fur trapping during the winter, and in the early 1700s reports indicate the development of commercial fisheries on rivers flowing into Bonavista and Notre Dame Bays. As settlers moved northward, they discovered they could harvest seals from herds that migrated southward each winter. Sealing was a very important support to year-round settlement on the northeast coast and in Labrador. Although soils were rather poor, subsistence farming was an important activity.

Questions:

1. Summarize the tasks of the fishing servants. Would you like this lifestyle? Why might people have become fishing servants?
2. What new industries developed in the late seventeenth century? How did the growth of these industries affect settlement?



2.73 Lester-Garland fishing premises and the banking establishment on the eastern side of Trinity Harbour, then called The Northside. This oil painting was originally owned by the Lester-Garland family. Artist and date are unknown.

2.74

TOPIC 2.8

Contact

Why didn't Europeans negotiate treaties with First Nations and Inuit who lived here?

How might the lives of First Nations and Inuit have been influenced by the European migratory fisheries?

Introduction

Although European activity and residence at Newfoundland and Labrador dramatically increased during the era of the migratory fisheries, First Nations and Inuit, for the most part, came into little contact with colonial authorities. One reason for this lack of contact was that European governments were much more interested in Newfoundland and Labrador's rich cod stocks than they were in land resources and establishing permanent settlements. As was common elsewhere in North America, this made it unnecessary to negotiate treaties with indigenous groups. However, First Nations and Inuit did have some informal encounters with European fishers when accessing marine resources. Sometimes these encounters were peaceful; at other times there was conflict. In either case these interactions resulted in change.

Inuit

Inuit of Labrador began having contact with Europeans during the 1500s. It is difficult to determine if the earliest exchanges were peaceful or not, but records suggest that by the last half of the 1500s Inuit were involved in skirmishes with European fishers and whalers. By the early 1600s relations were still generally hostile, especially in southern Labrador where French fishers had established shore stations. When the French left after the fishing season, their stations provided Inuit with a supply of boats and equipment, including iron nails, which they obtained by burning fishing stages. When European fishers returned the following summer, they would retaliate by attacking Inuit who ventured near their stations.

There are accounts of peaceful trade relations developing towards the end of the 1600s. By this time, Inuit had acquired many objects manufactured in Europe – including wooden boats with sails, barrels, screws and nails, knives, and some European clothing. In 1743, a trading post was established in North West River by Louis Fornel, a French merchant and explorer. This led to a regular pattern of trade.

2.75 This is possibly the first European depiction of Inuit. It is a 1567 woodcut of what is likely an advertisement for the exhibition of an Inuit woman and her child in the German city of Augsburg.

Experiencing The Arts

View the sculptures of Michael Massie on page 630 as he explores his mixed ancestry by combining modern and traditional elements in his work.

Innu

Innu were one of the first Aboriginal peoples in North America to encounter European explorers – the Portuguese, Basques, French, Dutch, and British. Yet Innu remained relatively unknown because they spent most of the year inland and less time in coastal areas.

Although European nations were using Newfoundland and Labrador as a migratory fishing station by the early 1500s, their presence did not greatly alter Innu life. Innu families maintained a seasonal round. Innu gathered berries in the fall. During the colder months, Innu hunted caribou, beaver, porcupine, ptarmigan, and other game in the Labrador-Quebec interior before visiting coastal areas to catch fish and sea birds. While marine resources were important in season, these resources did not have the same significance as they did for Inuit. For Innu, caribou was particularly important as it provided food, clothing, and other materials and also played a central role in many spiritual beliefs and rituals.

2.76 Skirmish at North West River, by artist William B. Ritchie
This picture shows what an encounter between the Norse and Innu may have looked like.

Beothuk

Prior to the establishment of the migratory fishery, Beothuk occupied Newfoundland and travelled throughout the island and to the coast of southern Labrador. The arrival of European fishers not only disrupted Beothuk travel patterns but also their **resource-based** life on the island.

Few contemporary reports mention contact with the indigenous population, but those that do state that European explorers captured several Beothuk to take back to Europe. Hence, Beothuk soon would have become wary and avoided coming in contact with Europeans or engaging in trade. The earliest account of an exchange of goods dates from 1612, when the colonist John Guy and his men met Beothuk in Trinity Bay and shared a meal with them. However, a planned second meeting miscarried when a passing ship "let fly their shott" at the assembled Beothuk. In revenge, Beothuk are said to have taken or destroyed gear from seasonal fishermen in Trinity Bay.

No records inform us about Beothuk activities in the latter half of the 1600s as there seem to have been few contacts or sightings. This changed dramatically in the early 1700s when English settlements expanded into Notre Dame Bay, Mi'kmaw families began to settle on the Newfoundland west and south coasts, and Innu from Labrador exploited fur bearing animals on the Northern Peninsula more extensively.

2.77 John Guy and the Beothuk

After an initial friendly trading encounter with Beothuk in 1612, John Guy returned to the spot where he and Beothuk had met. He found furs and shells left by Beothuk, who probably expected that Guy would leave goods in exchange. The image below is a fanciful depiction of this encounter in Trinity Bay. It is "fanciful" because the canoes are dugouts which Beothuk did not use; the depiction of Beothuk is not authentic; and it is unlikely that Guy would wear this type of clothing in his colony.

Source: Theodor de Bry, Historica Americae sive Novi Orbis, pt. XIII, 1628

2.78 A Mi'kmaw encampment is shown in this 1790 watercolour by Hibbet Newton Binney, a Halifax customs officer.

Mi'kmaq

Mi'kmaq probably had the closest relationship with Europeans, particularly in the early contact years. On the mainland, Mi'kmaq hunted small animals for their furs and traded these with Europeans for needed supplies. These supplies included items such as iron kettles and guns. Food such as flour was also traded. Over time, Mi'kmaq integrated these European items into their way of life. Although Mi'kmaq now had guns, they were tied to Europeans for a supply of bullets and servicing of the guns. Likewise, the use of European foodstuffs continued to erode their traditional ways of living.

Mi'kmaw oral tradition maintains Mi'kmaq lived in Ktaqamkuk (which means "land across the water") prior to European contact. Historians suggest Mi'kmaq came to the island of Newfoundland to hunt and to trap at the beginning of the seventeenth century, as European settlement encroached on their territory on the mainland. A number of writings indicate that Mi'kmaq continued to travel to the island occasionally over a period of about 50 years. In the mid-1600s, Mi'kmaq from Nova Scotia began using European shallops for travel – these vessels made the trip across the Cabot Strait easier. Travel and trade increased.

Newfoundland's environment and resources were conducive to Mi'kmaw way of life. Mi'kmaw families began to permanently settle on the south and west coasts, as well as in the central area of the island, during the last half of the seventeenth century.

Questions:

1. Interactions between indigenous peoples and Europeans resulted in the adoption of some European commodities into indigenous lifestyles. Give examples of these items. What impact might this adoption of commodities have had on indigenous peoples?
2. For each indigenous people noted in this section, summarize the nature of the relationship that each people had with Europeans. What similarities and differences do you note?

AT ISSUE

Preserving the Past

Based on what we have examined so far in this course, we can draw two conclusions. First, there is a lot of information to learn about the past. Second, the past shapes our current circumstances, as well as our sense of identity. Therefore, knowing about the past is important.

These two conclusions raise important questions. If you need to know about the past, but cannot know all of it, what do you focus on remembering and passing along to future generations?

While this textbook highlights some aspects of the history of our province, it cannot address everything from the past. Instead it focuses on events, ideas, and trends that may be useful to you as you explore the culture and heritage of our province today and consider current and future issues that may arise. Although it is important to learn facts and stories from our past, it is equally important to think about and question why these events have been selected to tell our history. This is called thinking critically about history.

As you will recall, social scientists frequently use the idea of significance to guide them as they research specific events in the past. Pulling out what is significant – that which has had deep consequences for many people over a period of time – enables us to create an overall understanding of an event or time period that is otherwise too large to discuss in its entirety. For example, one important idea related to the migratory fishery is that it had a significant impact on First Nations and Inuit who lived here.

Significance is also useful when examining local and family history. What is significant about the history of your community or area? What should be preserved and passed along to future generations? These are the questions that the approximately 80 community museums and 150 local archives in our province must consider as they work to preserve the history of their community or area. However, with more than 900 communities in our province, there is a considerable amount of information that is not being preserved.

There are things we can all do to ensure our heritage is not lost. In this section, you will have a chance to examine your community for pieces of history that are worth preserving. Once you have done this, you may wish to assume an active role in the heritage stewardship of your community.

Community histories are sometimes referred to as "small histories."

2.79 Heart's Content Cable Station

2.80 Display at The Rooms Provincial Museum

2.81 Migratory fishery
Many would argue that the migratory fishery is a significant event in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. But, is it an important part of the history of your community? What about your family's history? Shown here is an illustration from *Harper's Weekly*.

2.82 The Burton family
Hay Cove, Placentia Bay, c. 1920

2.83 Red Bay, Labrador is now under consideration for designation as a world heritage site.

2.84 Gros Morne National Park of Canada was designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1987.

2.85 L'Anse aux Meadows
National Historic Site of Canada.

By helping to pass along your culture and heritage to future generations, you become a steward of your cultural heritage. Preserving heritage can be done at many levels.

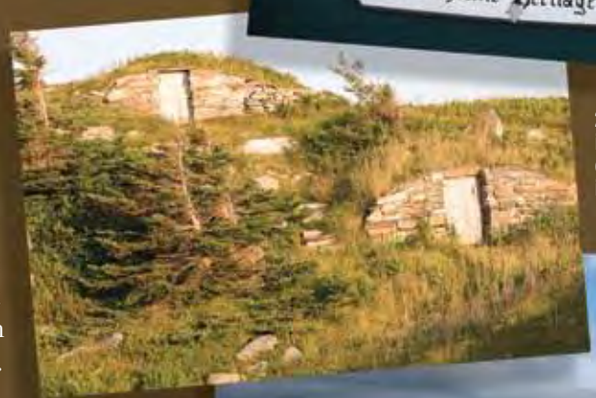
- Some people dedicate themselves to preserving their family history through genealogical research or by simply talking to family members about their lives and memories.
- Others work at the community level to identify, protect, and present significant heritage resources in their locality. Examples of this include community archives, museums, and historical societies.
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador helps to preserve the province's history and heritage by maintaining institutions such as The Rooms and operating a system of provincial historic sites.
- Parks Canada is responsible for national historic sites in Newfoundland and Labrador, including Hawthorne Cottage in Brigus and the Red Bay site in Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador is also home to two world heritage sites – Gros Morne National Park and L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site – both of which are managed by Parks Canada.

Heritage can be divided into two categories – tangible heritage and intangible heritage. Tangible heritage encompasses items that you can see, touch, and/or handle; it is sometimes referred to as material culture. Intangible heritage refers to practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills passed on from previous generations.

2.86 Winterholme, the house that Sir Marmaduke Winter built in St. John's in 1905-1907

Tangible Heritage

Tangible heritage can be further divided into two categories – built heritage and moveable heritage. Built heritage includes buildings, structures, and engineering works (such as roads, bridges, and fences). In Newfoundland and Labrador, many of our heritage resources fall under this heading, including historic sites like Winterholme Heritage Inn at St. John's and the root cellars in Elliston.



2.87 Root cellars in Elliston, some of which are still in use.

Much of our tangible heritage is made up of the objects of daily life. Sometimes called moveable heritage, this category includes artifacts, artistic works, technological and industrial tools, textiles, fossils, and so on. Some examples of moveable heritage are easy to find, such as tools used in the fishery. Others are a little more difficult to locate, such as items found at archaeological excavations.

2.88 Examples of moveable heritage in Port au Port

Documents, books, and other archival materials also fall under the heading of moveable heritage. These may include letters written by a soldier in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War or ledger books used by merchants more than 100 years ago.

Many families preserve their tangible heritage by handing down photographs, letters, and other personal objects from one generation to the next. Similarly, our national historic sites, provincial archives, museums, and galleries (such as The Rooms), and community museums all preserve artifacts, artistic works, and other tangible reminders of our collective past which we can see and experience in person.

2.89 The Rooms, St. John's

2.90

2.91 Mary March Museum, Grand Falls-Windsor

Intangible Heritage

Intangible heritage is sometimes called "living heritage" because it is very much alive and always changing. According to UNESCO, it includes our "living expressions and traditions" inherited and transmitted from generation to generation. Our traditional songs, stories, dances, dialects, words and expressions, knowledge, skills, customs, practices, and folklore are all considered intangible heritage.

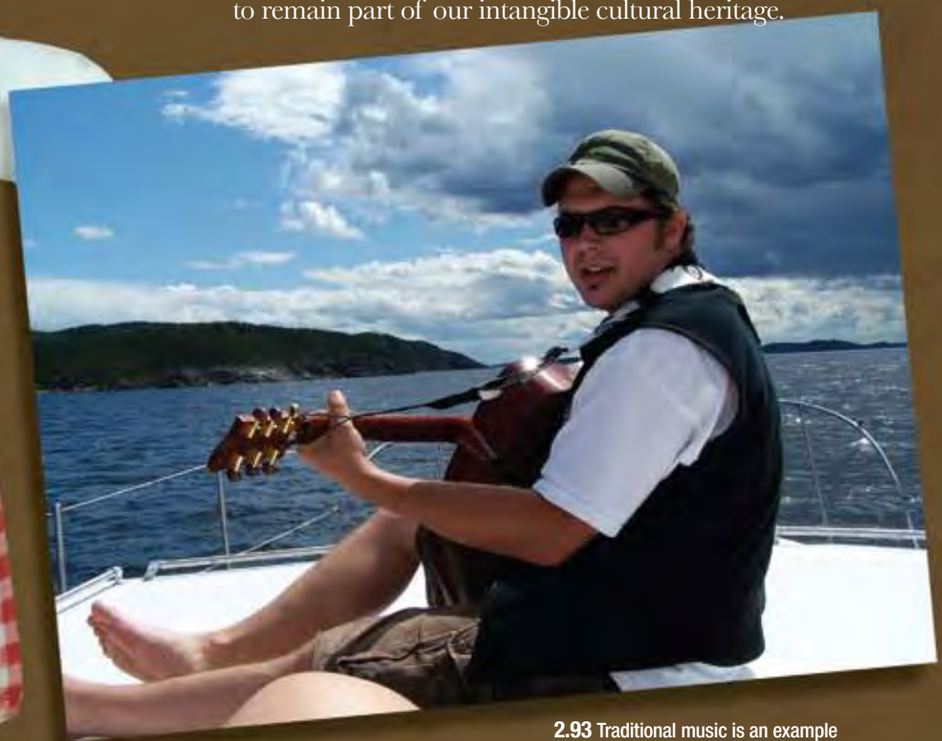
2.92 Mending a cod trap at Ryan Premises National Historic Site of Canada

Some examples of our intangible heritage are relatively easy to recognize, such as a traditional song like "I'se the B'y". Other examples might not be so obvious. The knowledge and skills required to properly mend a **cod-trap** using a net needle, or to split a codfish using cut-throat and splitting knives, for example, are parts of our intangible cultural heritage.

In order to preserve intangible cultural heritage, it must be transmitted or passed on from one generation to the next.

Traditionally, songs, stories, skills, and knowledge were passed on orally in Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, some songs and stories that existed for centuries were rarely, if ever, written down until university researchers began recording and transcribing them in the 1950s.

However, while recordings, videos, photographs, and transcriptions may preserve specific examples of our intangible heritage from a specific place and time, they do not keep it alive. Intangible heritage is fluid, dynamic, and always changing with each generation – just as a song or story is always a little different depending on who is performing it and when it is being performed. Our cultural expressions, customs, knowledge, and skills must be passed on from person to person and practised from generation to generation to remain part of our intangible cultural heritage.



2.93 Traditional music is an example of intangible heritage.

2.94 Although an Innu tea doll is a piece of tangible heritage, the skills required to make it are part of intangible heritage.

Identifying Significant Local Heritage

Every community in Newfoundland and Labrador has a unique history. Preserving that history is important. But how can you do this? The following exercise describes one way that you and your classmates can engage in heritage stewardship.

1. As a class, list examples of tangible heritage in your area that you believe should be preserved. (Your teacher may add to your list.)

2. Working alone or in a small group, select an item from your list that interests you. Research your item to establish its significance.

3. Use the information you have gathered to create an argument explaining why this item should be preserved.

4. Present your argument to your class. Use photographs and stories in your presentation.

5. As a class, identify the three most significant heritage resources that should be preserved from your community.

6. As an extension, your class could make a presentation to your town or local heritage organization explaining why it is important to preserve these resources for future generations.

DOING HISTORICAL RESEARCH

When historians conduct research, they often formulate a central question to focus their work. This helps to narrow their research from a broad topic (such as: "How did contact with Europeans change life for Aboriginal groups in Newfoundland and Labrador?") to something specific (such as: "How did the establishment of a French trading post at North West River in 1743 affect Inuit economy and society?").

Here are some possible questions you could ask while conducting your own historical research:

1. What experience from the past do I want to know more about?
2. What is the central question that will guide my inquiry? What are some other specific questions I need to ask in my research?
3. Where can I get information to help answer my questions? Who can help me find answers to my questions? Which books, images, and other documents can I use? How reliable are these sources?
4. What conclusions and knowledge have I drawn from my research? How can I summarize this in a written report?
5. How can I share my research with others? Who is my audience? What are the most important points to emphasize?

2.95

2.96

Traditional music is an example of intangible heritage. What do you think is worth preserving in your community?

Lester-Garland Premises in Trinity has been restored and is now a Provincial Historic Site.

The North Atlantic Aviation Museum tells the story of Gander's involvement in the development of aviation over the North Atlantic.

For Discussion:

1. Pretend you are writing your family's history. Identify three or four significant events to describe. What makes these events more significant than others? Do you think other members of your family would identify the same events? Why or why not?

2. Pretend you are writing a history of your community. Together with your class, write a list of questions you need to answer. Here are some examples: When was your community settled? How did people earn a living? Who were some important figures in your community's settlement and development?

4. How have our present lifestyles evolved from the development of the migratory fishery? What has changed since then? What has remained the same? How is your way of life different from your grandparents' way of life when they were your age? How are your lifestyles the same?

Questions:

1. Use your skills in photography and storytelling to create a storyboard called "Exploring Place".
   a. Find an old photograph of a particular location in your community.
   b. Take a photograph of the same place today.
   c. Create a 150 word summary that describes what has changed and why it changed.

2. Based on your exploration of heritage resources in this section:
   a. What are two of your community's most significant tangible heritage resources? Explain.
   b. What are two of your community's most significant intangible heritage resources? Explain.

Chapter Two Review

Summary

In this chapter we have examined briefly the roots of Newfoundland and Labrador culture. We began with how humans populated Earth. We then studied the earliest peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador, the descendants of these peoples who were present at the time of European arrival, and some of the main European groups who arrived. This was followed by a discussion of aspects of the migratory fishery, including governance and the beginnings of settlement. Finally, early contact between Europeans and First Nations and Inuit was examined.

Key Ideas

- There are several theories which attempt to explain the peopling of Earth and how humans originally arrived in the Americas.
- According to archaeologists, various AmerIndian and Paleo-Eskimo groups migrated to, lived in, and disappeared from our area from 7000 BCE onward.
- These early AmerIndian groups were the ancestors of First Nations (Beothuk, Innu, and Mi'kmaq), who (with the possible exception of Mi'kmaq) inhabited Newfoundland and Labrador at the time just prior to European contact. Thule were the ancestors of Inuit.
- A combination of factors in late fifteenth century Europe encouraged exploration westward, which resulted in the "discovery" of the Americas.
- The discovery of fish off Newfoundland and Labrador led to the development of a transatlantic fishery by western European maritime nations.
- Cod fishing was carried out both on the offshore banks and in inshore waters.
- The cod fishery offered great profits to participants, but also great risks.
- The migratory fishery was mostly governed by custom and was often lawless.
- The migratory fishery lasted for nearly four centuries, but settlement was attempted in the early 1600s.
- The migratory fishery brought Europeans into contact with Aboriginal peoples.

Key Terms

Aboriginal
Archaeology
Economics
Evidence
First Nations
Governance
Indigenous people
Intangible culture
Inuit
Migration
Migratory fishery
Perspective
Prehistoric
Sponsored settlement
Tangible culture

Questions

1. The indigenous peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador developed sophisticated tools and implements which enabled them to live successfully in a harsh environment. Write a short essay on this statement.

2. What factors enabled and encouraged Europeans to engage in the migratory fishery?

3. Why did Europeans originally find little reason for permanent settlement in order to prosecute the fishery? Which reasons were most significant?

4. Describe relationships between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples. Identify specific impacts one group had on another.