

Student Essay on Outline of the Growth of the French Influence in North America

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Essay

The French had a great impact and influence when they arrived in North America. France was a latecomer in the scramble for real estate in the New World. Throughout the 1600's, France became the mightiest and most feared nation in Europe. The nation's leaders began to be interested in overseas colonies. Then, in the year 1608, France established a colony in Quebec, Canada. When they arrived they immediately became friendly with the Huron Indians and allied with them in battle against the Iroquois in New York. As soon as they met the Iroquois in battle they scared them away with their guns and other advanced weaponry. The government of New France soon fell under direct control of the king of France. The government was very autocratic and had no popularly elected assembly. The decisions were up to the magistrate. Soon, after the king controlled the government, the population of New France began to grow at a very sluggish pace. The French government did not favor the New France colony. They instead favored their Caribbean Island colonies. One of the most significant things that existed in the New French colony was beaver. This was the one and possibly only valuable resource. People like fashion-setters valued the beaver to make clothes and hats out of its fur. Fur-trappers caught and sold the beavers. They also recruited Indians into the fur business. However, this business did have a few drawbacks, for example: they extinguished the beaver population in many areas creating ecological damage and it went against Indian beliefs. French Catholic missionaries, mostly Jesuits, soon began to "save the Indians for Christ" and from the fur trappers. Some of the Jesuits suffered if the Indian tribe did not want to cooperate with them. Overall, the Jesuit missionaries played a vital role as explorers and geographers. The French soon founded new cities in the New World that exist today, such as Detroit, Michigan. The French officials persisted in efforts to block Spain on and around the Gulf of Mexico. They planted a few fortified posts, which are now, for example, Mississippi and Louisiana. At these posts they created river ports and soon tapped all fur trade of the huge interior valley. Eventually, grain was floating down the Mississippi River for transshipment. Then, a few years later, the New French colony began to clash with the English in the New World.