

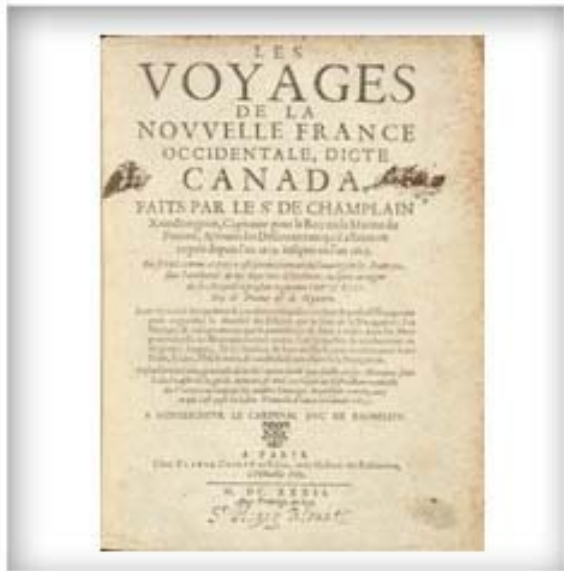


Coupe d'un amiral de 104 pièces de canon...
[Cross-section of a 104-gun flagship giving the main dimensions and the names of the interior compartments],
from *Le Neptune françois ou Atlas nouveau des cartes marines*, by Pène, Cassini et al., 1693
FR BNF Ge CC 1114, 1ère partie, p. 7



Navigation

From the time of Champlain's expeditions until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, travel between France and the colony was subject to numerous technical and natural constraints. Developed by the Portuguese beginning in the 1440s, the European art of navigation on the open sea combined the use of the portolano and later, nautical charts, which gradually became more accurate and complete as new territories were discovered, with the use of the compass and the astrolabe to determine latitude. The secret of longitude was not discovered until the 1760s, with the invention of the first marine chronometer. Dead reckoning was the common method of navigating at the time, using empirically calculated speed and successive landfalls. Shipwrecks and damage resulting from errors in judgement were part of the routine of crossing, especially in view of the extreme contrasts of weather (storms, fog and ice) encountered on approaching the coast of Canada. In the 15th century, fully rigged sailing ships became more common than galleys because of their higher waterline, rounded form and the complex rigging of their two or three masts. However, they were heavy and slow. French shipbuilding, long a craft-based enterprise, improved in the 18th century thanks to the contribution of specialized engineers, and it became possible to build ships with increased tonnage. Still, the voyage between the two continents lasted fifty days, on average.



Treatise on Sea Navigation

Samuel de Champlain's last published work was a retrospective summary of his thirty years of Canadian experience. It appeared in print soon after the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, signed on March 29, 1632, which returned to France the colony that had been captured by the English in 1629. At this time, the Company of One Hundred Associates recovered its trade monopoly in New France and brought over the families of colonists. In his *Traité de la Marine*, Champlain handed down the knowledge he had accumulated on his 22 North Atlantic crossings. He formulated specific technical information and provided essential advice for navigating and approaching Canada's coasts. He hoped to make the sailor's job easier and wanted to present the undertaking to his countrymen in a favourable light.

Traité de la Marine et du devoir d'un bon marinier par le sieur de Champlain [Treatise on Sea Navigation and the duties of a good sailor by Sieur de Champlain], published as an appendix to *Les Voyages de la Nouvelle France occidentale, dicte Canada*, Paris, Claude Collet, 1632 ; title page

CA BNC Réserve FC330 C5 1632cc



New France
NEW HORIZONS



Roll of passengers and crew of the *Saint-Jean*,
April 1, 1636
FR AD17 B 5654 pièce 105

The Crossing

The crossing to New France was subject to all sorts of perils: weather, pirates, and illness among the crew and passengers. With these uncertainties, the duration of the crossing varied. In 1665, it took New France's new Intendant, Jean Talon, 117 days to reach Québec; in 1678, the *Arc-en-ciel* made the trip in 35 days. Taking into account the requirements of the navigational season, it was better to set sail from France before May 1 and from Québec before the end of September. Since ships were not larger than 200 tonnes in the 17th century, accommodations on board were quite modest, and space was limited. Often, food and merchandise were spoiled by water seepage, and passengers had to make do with cold meals and soggy bedding. So great were the risks involved in reaching these far-off destinations, that surviving the dangers and perils of the sea depended as much on chance as on luck. Despite everything, most of the sailors and passengers arrived safely.



New France
NEW HORIZONS

Passenger List

A multi-purpose voyage promised more profits for investors. It was advantageous for a fishing boat to transport passengers from La Rochelle to the settlement at Québec. *Le Noir* carried 51 passengers, more than half of whom started families in New France.



List of crewmen and passengers on the ship *Le Noir* of Holland, Captain Pierre Fillye, sailing from Dieppe for Québec to fish, 1664
FR AD17 B 5665 pièce 110



New France
NEW HORIZONS



The Voyage of Asseline de Ronval

Uninterested in the studies his father intended him to pursue, Asseline de Ronval took advantage of his father's death to travel the world. On May 22, 1662, he embarked for New France. The crossing lasted a good month. After three weeks in Québec and the surrounding area, Asseline de Ronval went by small craft to Trois-Rivières and then Montréal. Trying to escape the Canadian winter, which had been described to him as long and harsh, the Norman then decided to return to France. He left in late October and arrived on December 12 of the same year, ready for new adventures.

Journal en abrégé des voyages de Monsieur Asseline de Ronval, tant par terre que par mer avec plusieurs remarques, circonstances et aventures très curieuses [Abridged diary of the travels of Monsieur Asseline de Ronval, by land and by sea, with various comments, circumstances and most curious adventures], ca. 1695
CA ANC MG18-J2 p.1-36



New France
NEW HORIZONS

The St. Lawrence River

Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, engineer-hydrographer to the King, was asked by the Secretary of State for the Marine to draw the maps required for Père Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix's *Histoire et description de la Nouvelle-France* (1744). The goal of Bellin's work was to define as accurately as possible the entire hydrographic system of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi basins. Above all, it had to provide information to ships so they could enter the St. Lawrence more easily and make their way safely to the interior of the colony. Due to obstacles such as shallow and narrow channels, reefs, shoals, currents and ice, ships took from 10 to 12 days to sail from Newfoundland's Grand Banks to the settlement upriver at Québec.



Carte du fleuve de Saint Laurent ou rivière du Canada
[Map of the St. Lawrence River, or River of Canada], from
Île d'Orléans to Île d'Anticosti, by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin,
scale 1:500,000, after 1744
FR CHAN N III Canada 6



New France
NEW HORIZONS



Journaux de bord de la flûte « Le Chameau » commandée successivement par MM. de Voutron, de Lamirande, de Beauharnois et Meschin Meschin [Ship's logs from the supply ship the Chameau, commanded successively by Messrs. de Voutron, de Lamirande, de Beauharnois and Meschin], 1720-1724

FR CHAN Marine 4JJ 11 pièces 7 à 11

The Chameau

Despite enormous progress in knowledge of oceans and shorelines, sea navigation in the 18th century was at the mercy of the elements. For this reason, the Secretary of State for the Marine required all ship captains to keep a detailed log for each of their voyages, in which they recorded the main navigational difficulties encountered. These observations were then transcribed to charts by the royal engineers, as an aid to other sailors. Off the rocky coast of Louisbourg, the strong sea currents often made it difficult for ships to approach the shore. On the evening of August 25, 1725, a hurricane raged through the area. The next day, the debris from a heavy tonnage vessel was found along the coast. On the 27th, it was identified as the *Chameau*. All 310 passengers perished. Only 180 bodies were recovered from the sea and buried at La Baleine. The fact that most were wearing nightclothes indicates the violence and suddenness of the wreck. Among the passengers were Jacques L'Hermite, an engineer from Plaisance, Guillaume Chazel, who had just been named Intendant at Québec, and Charles-Hector de Ramezay, son of the Governor of Montréal.



New France
NEW HORIZONS



A General View of Québec, from Point Lévy,
by Richard Short, September 1, 1761
CA ANC C-134474

View of Québec

Founded by Samuel de Champlain in 1608, Québec is one of the oldest cities in New France. Situated on the St. Lawrence, its port was the principal debarkation point for all travellers coming from France and also the point of departure for the interior of the colony.