

The French and the First Nations Peoples

In order to compete with the British, New France needed the support of the First Nations.

1. First Nations gave fur traders an efficient system for transporting furs to central points:
 - carried furs in a small canoe to a central point
 - at the central point, transferred their furs to a larger canoe heading to Montreal or Quebec City
2. They built canoes similar to the First Nations:
 - they were small
 - only two people had to paddle
 - they were narrow and travelled faster
 - they were light, which made them easy to carry on portages
3. First Nations showed them how to make snowshoes out of animal skin and wood to help them walk on snow.
4. First Nations taught them how to make dog sleds:
 - teams of 6-12 dogs
 - could pull loads of furs across great distances
 - were up to 3 metres long
 - built of wood, strapped together with raw materials

The First Nations signed a treaty, called “The Great Peace of Montreal,” with New France agreeing to cooperate with each other. Part of the agreement was that First Nations would not help the British (when war broke out in 1750’s, the Iroquois stayed neutral.)