



Jean Nicolet

Who Was He, Really?

What do you know about Jean Nicolet?

Jean Nicolet was...



An explorer hired by Spain to find new lands to conquer.

An explorer from New France looking for the Northwest Passage.

An interpreter and diplomat hired to begin official relations with Native nations.

None of the above.

You are Jean Nicolet and you work for the Governor of New France, Samuel de Champlain.





As an interpreter for New France, you have lived among the Nippising, a Native nation of the St. Lawrence River Valley. You also have acted as an ambassador between nations.

What does an ambassador do?

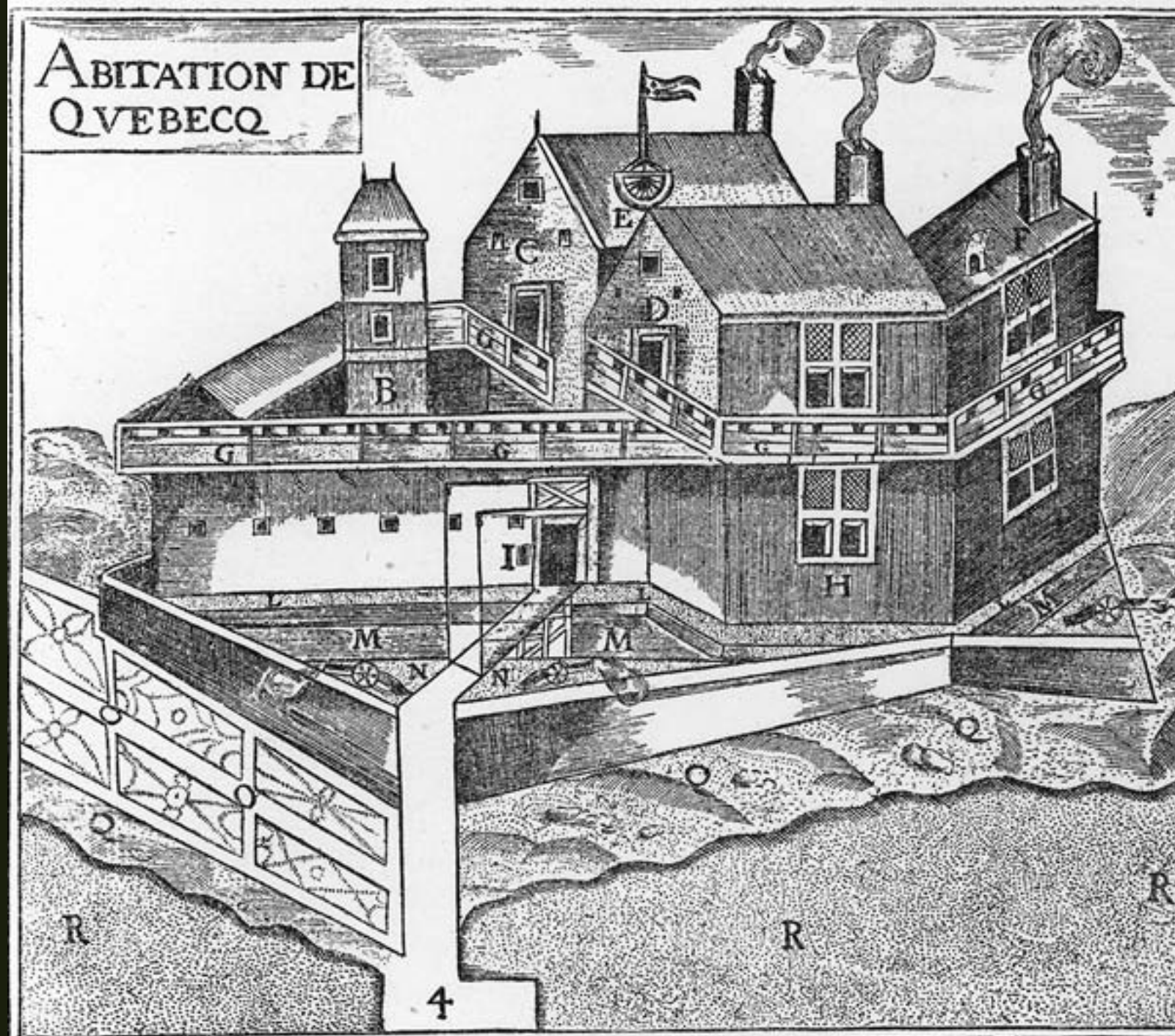
Makes laws for colonies.

Write histories of other times and places.

Officially represent a nation's interests.

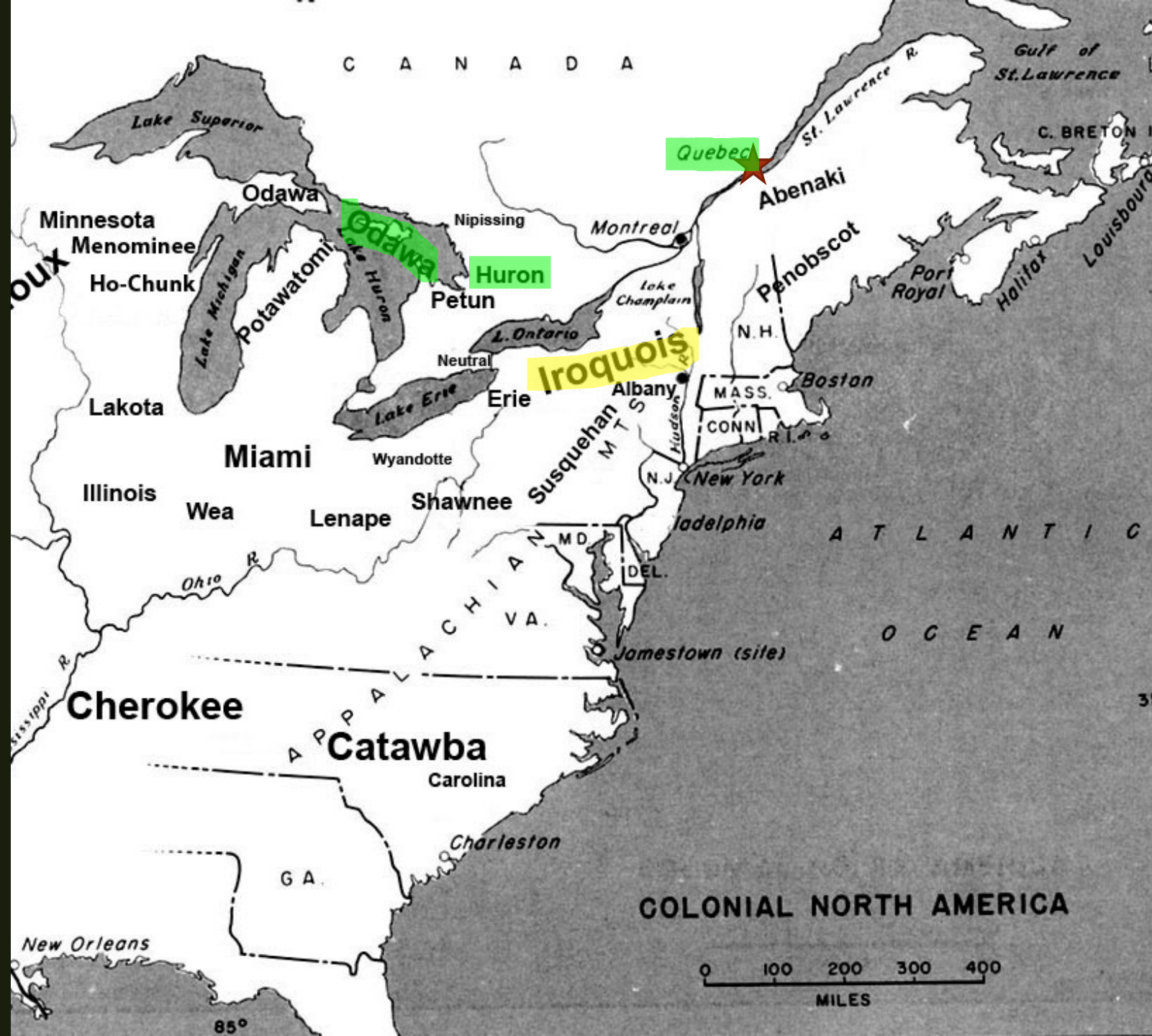
Lead troops into battle.

New France existed in what we now call Canada. In 1634, Quebec was the largest French settlement in New France. It was still very small. Less than 300 European colonists lived there.



Governor Champlain worried about his small colony. Since arriving, New France had made friends...and enemies. The Five Nations League of Iroquois was one such powerful enemy.

To survive, New France would need powerful allies. One way New France gained allies was through trade. The Huron and Ottawa (Odawa) Indian nations were allies of New France.





What kind of riches did the people of New France trade for with Native Americans?

Gold, silver, and other precious metals.

Furs, timber, and seafood.

Diamonds, rubies, and other gems.

None of the above.



“Jean,” says Governor Champlain, “I have a very important mission for you. Your skill with languages and friendships with Native Americans will come in very handy...”

Governor Champlain wants you to find a northern sea route to China called the Northwest Passage, if it exists.

Governor Champlain wants you to meet with Native nations and use your diplomatic skills to make peace between our allies and the Ho-Chunk.

Governor Champlain wants you to establish a French colony in the Great Lakes region.

All of the above.



Governor Champlain waits for your questions...

Where exactly do you
want me to go?

Who are the people you
want me to meet?

What do you want me to
do when I get there?

What should I pack for
the journey?

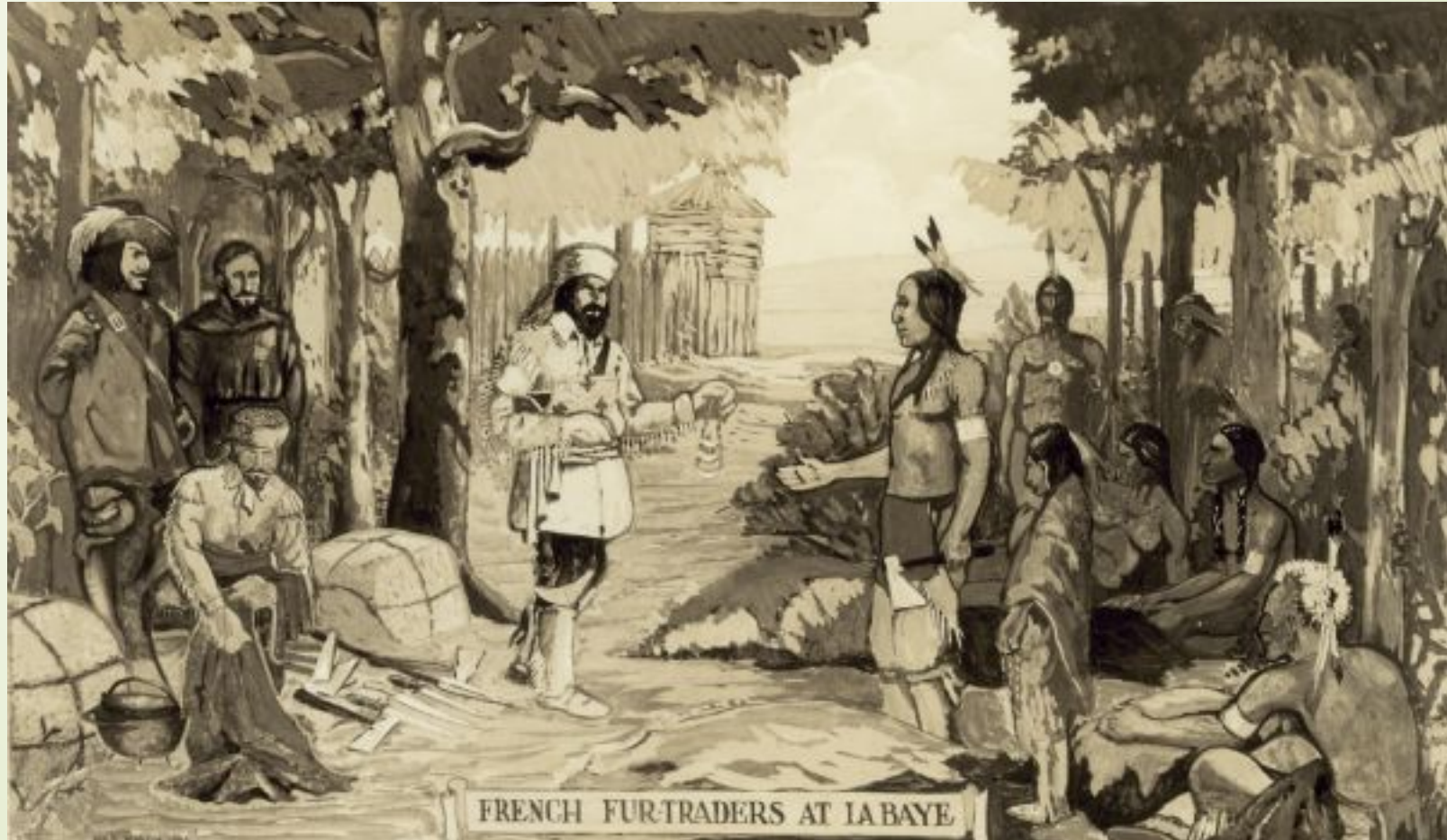
That's all the questions I
have.

“I want you to go to this region. I have reason to believe we could make powerful allies there.”



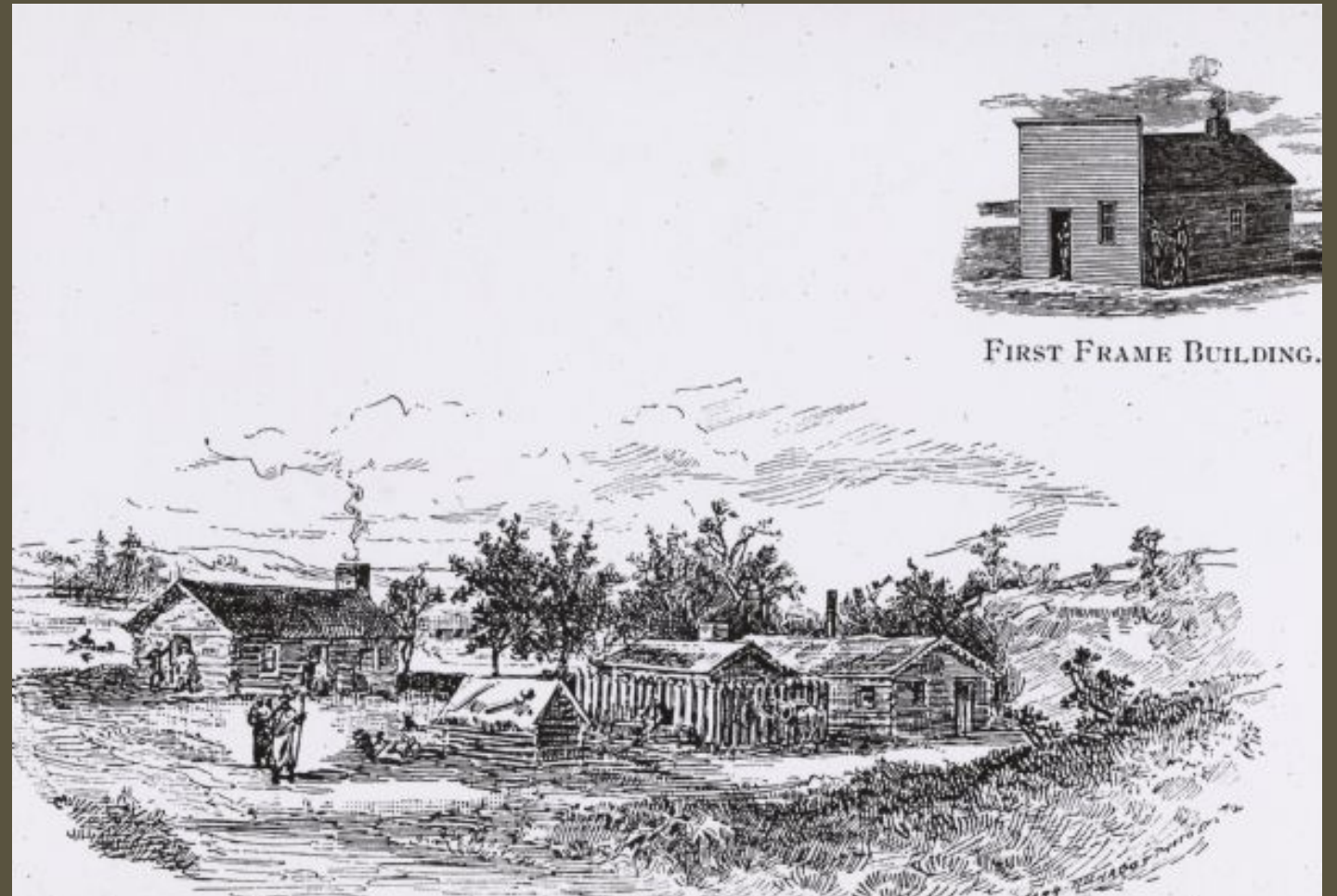
I have more questions...

“The people are called the Ho-Chunk. Their allies are the Menominee. I’ve heard they are very powerful! New France needs allies against the Iroquois Confederacy.”

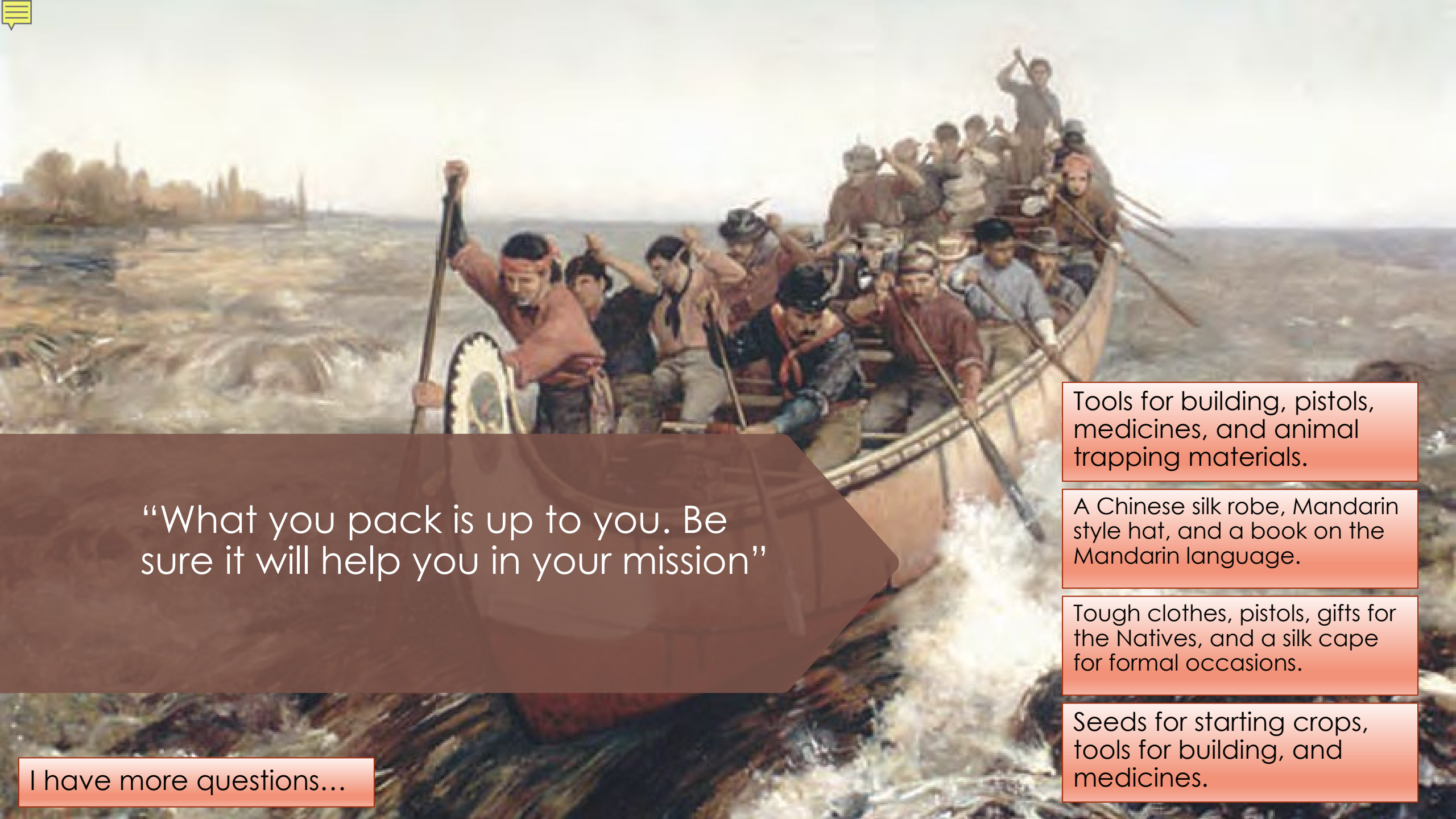


I have more questions...

“When you arrive, show the people that the French are powerful. But remember, we want peace and trade.”



I have more questions...



“What you pack is up to you. Be sure it will help you in your mission”

Tools for building, pistols, medicines, and animal trapping materials.

A Chinese silk robe, Mandarin style hat, and a book on the Mandarin language.

Tough clothes, pistols, gifts for the Natives, and a silk cape for formal occasions.

Seeds for starting crops, tools for building, and medicines.

I have more questions...

You pack for
your journey...

Unfortunately, the things you packed did you little good.
You'll have to go back and re-pack for your mission.

Go back and re-pack.

You continue your journey...



I have more questions...

You will need a tough and experienced crew for your journey. Who do you bring?

Some farmers, a blacksmith, and a land surveyor from New France.

Native American allies who know the land and water routes through the Great Lakes.

A nobleman, a priest, and other missionaries from New France.

A composer, a poet, and an artist from France.

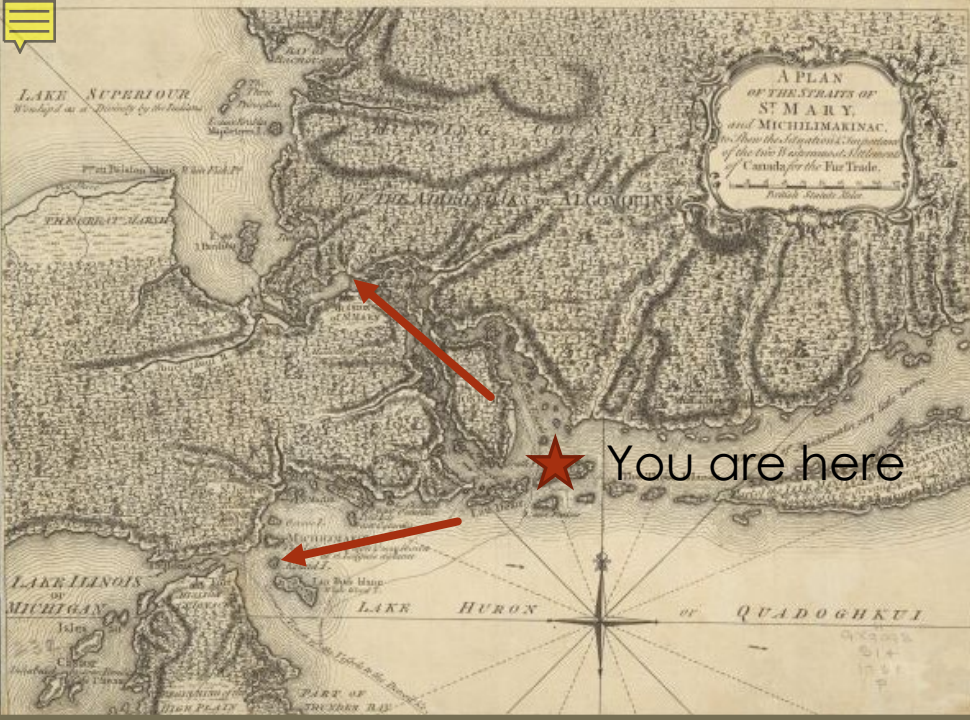
You choose
the members
of your party...

The people you brought along have no idea what to do. You'll have to go back and choose some different members for your crew.

Go back and re-choose.

You continue your journey...

You have a decision to make...



Head west by northwest. Your guides tell you there are great rapids ahead, but in three days journey you will come to a great sea. Today that sea is known as Lake Superior.

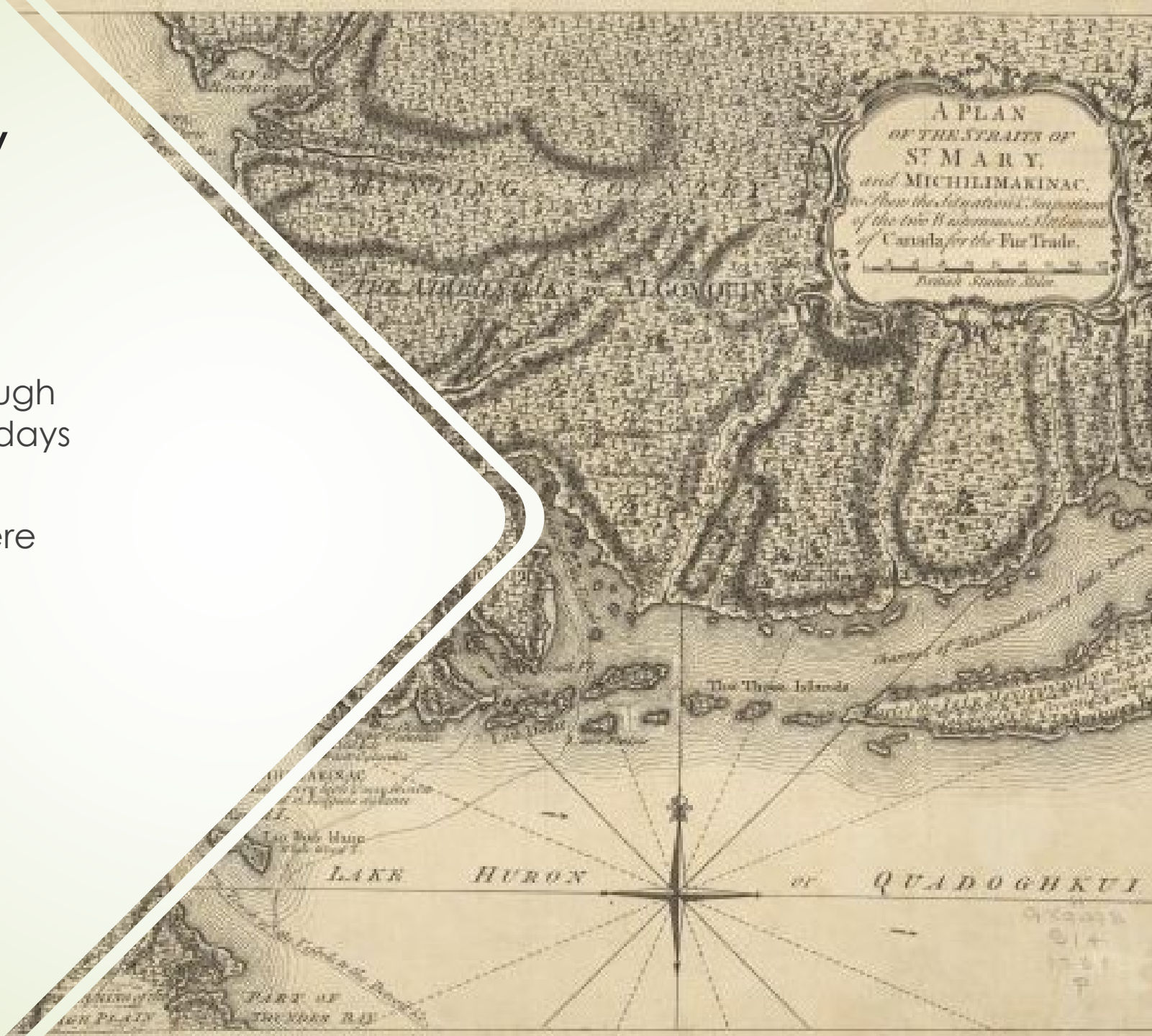
Head west by southwest. Your guides tell you that you will continue paddling for many days until you reach another great sea. Today that sea is known as Lake Michigan.

You head west by northwest...

With some difficulty you manage to portage and paddle your way through the Sault Ste. Marie rapids. In three days you arrive at Lake Superior.

Unfortunately, the Puans are nowhere to be found.

Go back and head west by southwest.



You continue your journey...

You travel for many days. Your party is getting nervous. Why?

Your guides don't like traveling far from home.

You were running out of food and water. You'd never make it to Asia with what you have left!

Your guides had no idea where they were and wanted to turn back.

The Hurons and Ottawa Indians with you are at war with the Ho-Chunk and their allies.



*Chasse de guerre
des Hurons et des Ottawa contre
(Hurons)*

You continue your journey...

★ You are here.

Menominee

Ho-Chunk

You are on the northern edge of Lake Michigan near the entry to Green Bay. Where do you go from here?

You paddle your canoes directly to the Ho-Chunk, landing ashore and announcing your arrival with your pistols. You will make them become your allies!

You decide to head a bit north and leave your canoes behind. You travel by land along the shore, hoping to find allies along the way.



You head directly to the Ho-Chunk nation...

When you arrive, you land your canoe ashore and fire your pistols into the air in a show of French power! Suddenly arrows and spears rain down from the sky. The entire Ho-Chunk nation is after you! You and your guides beat a hasty retreat, barely escaping with your lives!

Go back and choose again.

You continue your journey...

You are in hostile territory. What do you do?



Prepare for battle. Send one of your men to threaten the nearest village.

Leave a peace offering on shore. Send one of your men to the nearest village to talk about trade.

You prepare
for battle...

But you realize that you are outnumbered 1000 to 1. You
decide against it.

Go back and choose
again.

You continue your journey...

Menominee *

Your peace offering is accepted!
The Menominee generously agree
to arrange a council meeting and
feast for you. What do you do?

You refuse, stating that your message is for the Ho-
Chunk alone.

You accept. You feel that the Grand Village of the
Menominee is a good place to talk with both nations.

You refuse to
meet with the
council.

You are reminded that the Ho-Chunk will be there as
well, and that makes your mind up to go.

Go back and choose
again.

You continue your journey...



What do you wear for the feast?

A Chinese silk robe, a Mandarin-style hat, and a belt.

The same smelly clothes you've been traveling in.

A fancy silk cape and your best clothes.

A coon-skin cap and a leather jacket with lots of fringes.



You arrive! Women and children surround your group. There are thousands of men, women, and children. What do you do?

You fire your pistols into the air in a show of French power! Then you hand out presents to show you are friendly.


You start by handing out gifts. When they are all gone, eat and leave.

You arrange for musicians to play music as you arrive.

None of the above.



SUCCESS! You negotiate a peace treaty with the Ho-Chunk and Menominee nations!



What did we learn about Jean Nicolet?

- He was not lost
- He was not an explorer
- He did not wear Chinese robes
- He did not land a canoe at Red Banks firing his weapons
- He was a skilled diplomat who spoke many languages
- He knew that he needed to keep the peace to be successful
- He wore his best clothes for an important feast, even a silk cape
- He landed somewhere north of Green Bay and traveled on foot
- He entered modern-day Wisconsin near Marinette, not Red Banks
- He fired his guns into the air and gave presents away at a great feast
- He made peace with the Menominee and Ho-Chunk nations

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