

Lesson 2: French Explore the Mississippi

Vocabulary

trading post a place where people meet to trade goods

tributary a stream or river that flows into a larger river

Exploring the Mississippi

In 1534, the French founded the colony of New France in present-day Canada. The French who lived in the colony learned important things from the Native Americans. They learned how to make canoes and snowshoes. They traded goods with the Native Americans at **trading posts**. The French also learned of the Mississippi River from Native Americans. The French wanted to control the river. They thought it might help them reach new lands. They could set up more trading posts on these lands. They hoped the river might flow to the Pacific Ocean. Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet were French explorers. They explored the Mississippi in 1673. They realized that the river did not flow to the Pacific Ocean.

Founding Louisiana

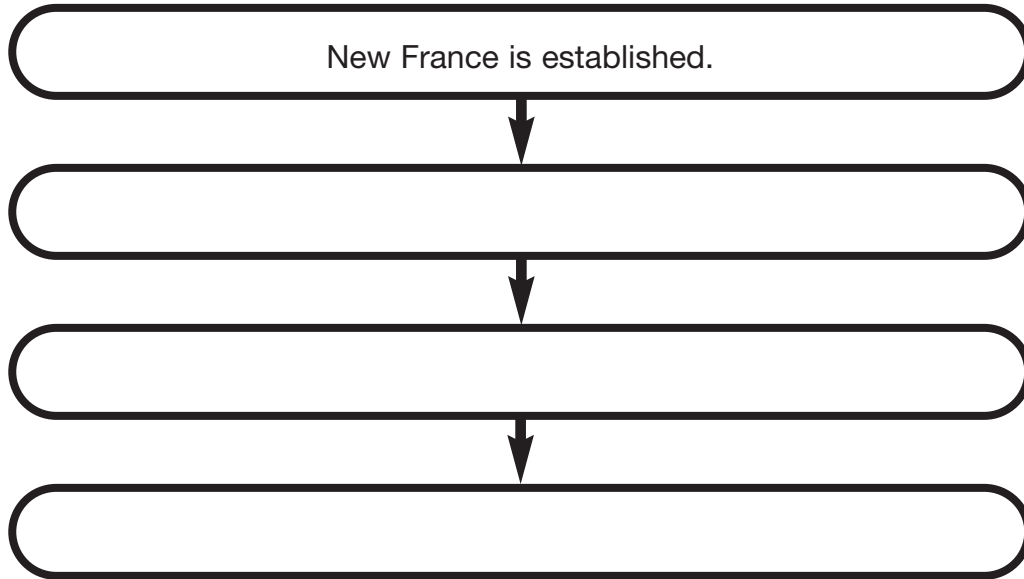
Robert La Salle was a French explorer. In the 1680s he traveled to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Then La Salle claimed the entire Mississippi River valley for France. He also claimed the river's **tributaries**. Tributaries are streams or rivers that flow into larger rivers. He named the area Louisiana. It became part of New France.

New French Settlements

Many settlements in New France became large cities. The city of New Orleans was set up in 1718. It became the capital of Louisiana in 1722. New Orleans was built near the mouth of the Mississippi River. This helped it become a busy trading center.

Lesson 2: Review

1. **Sequence** Fill in the sequencing chart by putting the lesson's events in correct order.



2. How did French settlers first learn about the Mississippi River?

3. **Critical Thinking: Point of View** Give two reasons the French were interested in exploring the Mississippi.

4. What did La Salle do when he reached the mouth of the Mississippi?

5. How did New Orleans's location help the city grow?
