

The Spanish Borderlands

1500 1540 1580

The Spanish conquistadors who explored the Americas found what they were looking for—gold and silver. Mining for these treasures became the most important money-making activity in Spain's American colonies. To protect its gold and silver mines from the other European countries that were building colonies in North America, the Spanish created a **buffer**. A **buffer** is an area of land that serves as a barrier. The buffer north of New Spain protected it from New France, New Netherland, and the English colonies. It came to be known as the Spanish **borderlands**. The borderlands stretched across what are today northern Mexico and the southern United States from Florida to California.

Presidios

Spanish soldiers led the way into the borderlands. Once the soldiers found a good place to settle, their first duty was to build a fort, called a **presidio** (pray•SEE•dee•oh), and shelters for the settlers. The largest and most important presidio in the borderlands was named St. Augustine. It was located on the Atlantic coast of Florida on a bay first explored by Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés

neh•NEN•dehs day ah•vee•LAYS) and 500 soldiers and settlers reached the cation of present-day St. Augustine in 165. St. Augustine became the first permanent, or long-lasting, European settlement in what is now the United States. It was founded 42 years before the



Vocabulary
 buffer
 borderlands
 presidio
 permanent
 scarce
 hacienda
 self-sufficient
 mission

FOCUS
 Why might a government today decide to expand its lands?
Main Idea As you read, look for reasons the Spanish government decided to expand its lands in North America.



LESSON 1

This glass bottle from St. Augustine is over 400 years old. The mission bell (above) is from the San Juan Bautista Mission in California.

English landed at Jamestown and 43 years before the French founded Quebec.

Once the Spanish soldiers landed at St. Augustine, they quickly built small wooden houses and a wooden presidio in which the settlers could seek protection. Fearful of the English pirates and the Indian raiders, the Spanish soon began to strengthen the presidio by building walls of stone around the wooden fort. It took 25 years to finish. The Castillo (kah•STEE•yoh) de San Marcos, as the presidio was called, was strong enough to protect Spanish settlers from any attackers.

Despite the danger of living in the borderlands, Menéndez felt that the settlement at St. Augustine held great promise. In a

letter to the Spanish king, he wrote that Florida could

“bring enormous profits from vineyards, sugar, cattle, ship stores, pearls, timber, silk, wheat, and endless supplies of fruit.”

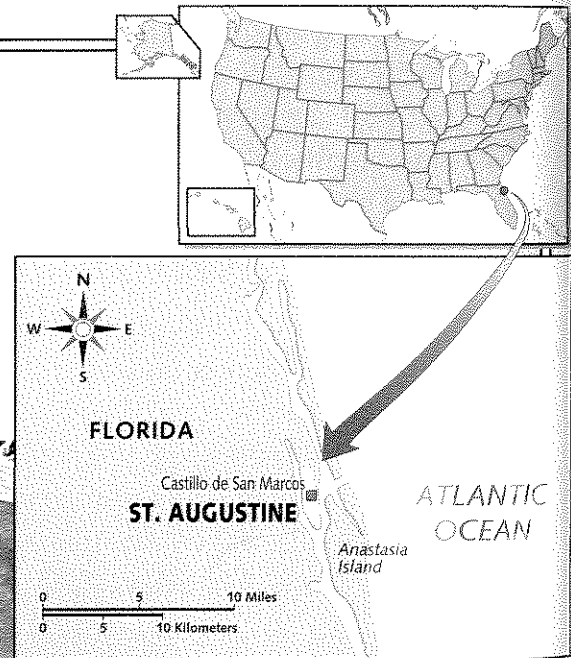
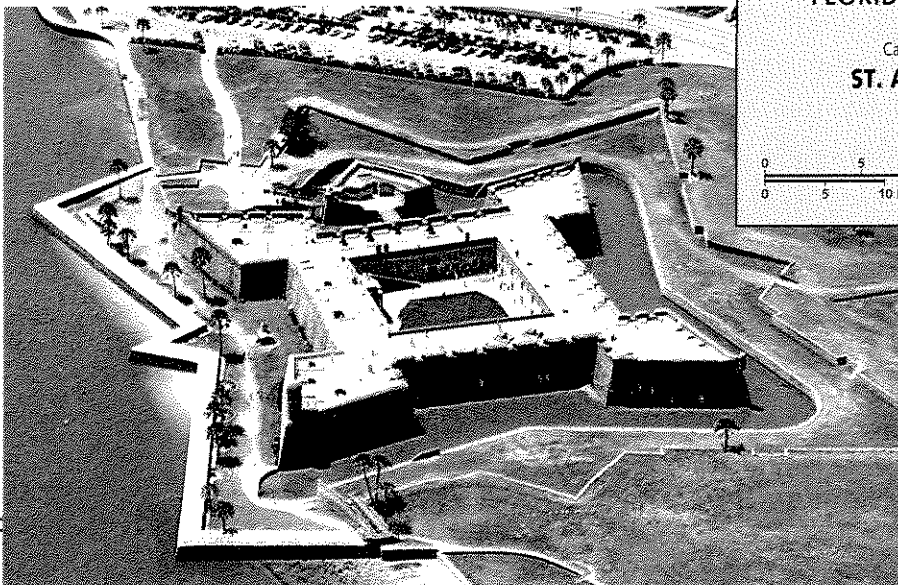
St. Augustine never lived up to the hopes of becoming a source of wealth for Spain. But it became important for another reason. It served as Spain’s military headquarters in North America. It was one of a line of hundreds of presidios stretching from Florida to California that protected the settlers.

REVIEW Why did Spain build presidios across the borderlands?

GEOGRAPHY

St. Augustine

St. Augustine is located in northeastern Florida, near the Atlantic Ocean. Spain built the city and ruled it for more than 200 years. During that time its settlers lived through many invasions and attacks. In 1763 the English gained control of St. Augustine. Spain again ruled the settlement from 1783 until 1821, when Florida became part of the United States.



The Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine still stands today and attracts many visitors. It is more than 400 years old.

The Growth of New France

1670 1700 1730

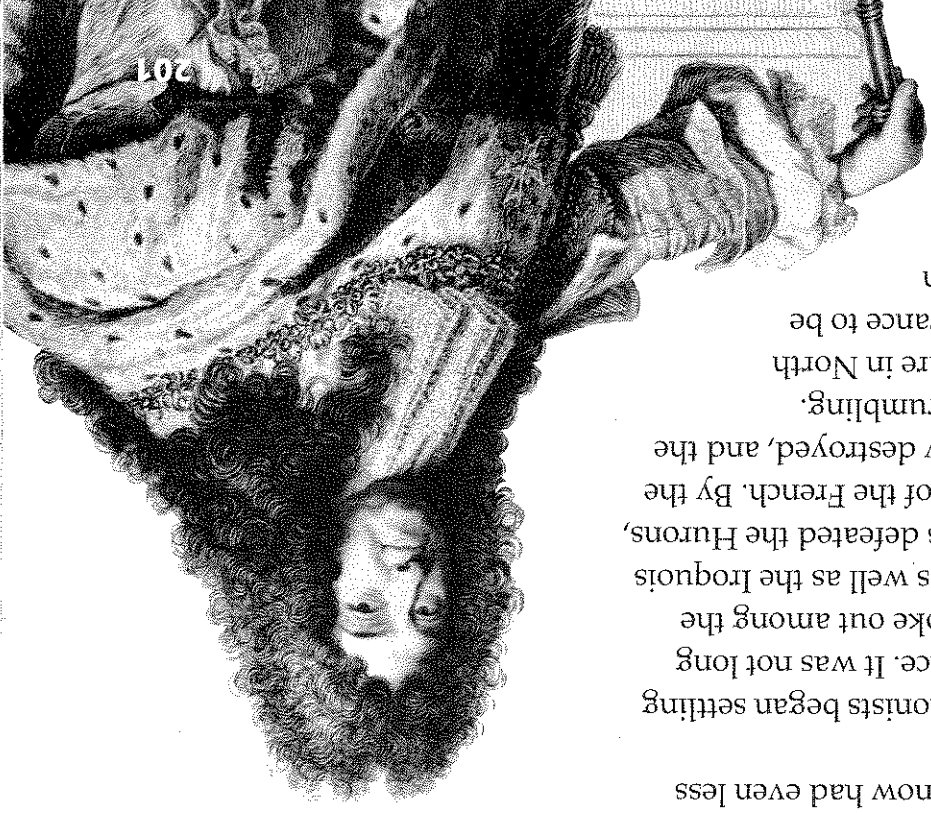
In New Spain the Spanish grew wealthy from silver and gold. In New France the French grew wealthy from the fur trade. But unlike the Spanish, most French people were not interested in settling North America. From 1608 to 1763 the French built only two towns in New France—Quebec and Montreal. They also built some small towns across Canada and along the Mississippi River.

A Slow-Growing Empire

The French had been fishing along the eastern coast of North America since the 1500s. In time they moved inland and established a trade in animal furs with the Hurons. The fur trade led to the founding of Quebec in 1608. But by 1625 its population had grown to only about 60 people. In the early 1600s, civil wars kept many people from leaving France. Later, under the rule of King Louis XIV, peaceful times returned. The French now had even less reason to leave home.

Meanwhile, English and Dutch colonists began settling the coastal region south of New France. It was not long before conflicts over the fur trade broke out among the French, the English, and the Dutch, as well as the Iroquois and the Hurons. In time, the Iroquois defeated the Hurons, who were the main trading partners of the French. By the 1660s the French fur trade was nearly destroyed, and the French hold in North America was crumbling.

Hoping to rebuild the French empire in North America, Louis XIV declared New France to be a **royal colony**. The king, rather than a business people, would now rule the colony. The king appointed officials to live in New France and help



King Louis XIV of France hoped to rebuild New France.

- Vocabulary**
- royal colony
 - portage
 - tributary
 - proprietary colony
 - proprietor

Main Idea Read to find out what steps the French government took to protect its interests in New France.

What steps do governments take today to protect their interests?

FOCUS

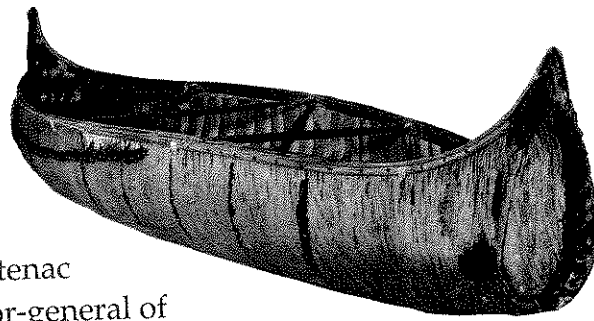
LESSON
2

him govern. The head of these officials was called the governor-general.

In 1672 King Louis XIV appointed Count de Frontenac (FRAHN•tuh•nak) governor-general of New France. The count's hot temper and stern ways often got him into trouble with the king. His friendly ways with the Indian peoples, however, helped the colony prosper, or do well.

Frontenac encouraged exploration of the West. But the way west was not easy. French ships could not travel very far inland before coming to water that was too shallow or dangerous for sailing. To travel the rivers, the French learned from their American Indian trading partners how to build and use birchbark canoes. These boats could navigate shallow rivers. They also were light enough to be carried around waterfalls and rapids or overland between rivers. The French called this method of transportation **portage** (PAWR•tij).

The Indian peoples often talked with the French traders about a great river, larger



Europeans used birchbark canoes to explore waterways.

than all the others. The Algonkins (al•GON•kins) called it the Mississippi, which means "Big River." Ever

since the days of Jacques Cartier, the French had hoped to find a Northwest Passage through North America to Asia. Frontenac believed that the Mississippi River just might be the route they were looking for.

REVIEW Why did King Louis XIV declare New France a royal colony?

Exploring the Mississippi

In 1673 Governor-General de Frontenac sent an expedition to explore the rivers and lakes that he hoped would lead French traders to the Mississippi River and then to Asia. The members of the expedition were Jacques Marquette (ZHAHK mar•KET), a Catholic missionary who knew several

The expeditions of Marquette and Joliet and of La Salle gave France claim to the Mississippi River, the longest river in North America.

