

From the National Film Board of Canada

# Rendezvous Canada, 1606

Drawn from historical records, *Rendezvous Canada, 1606* recreates a pivotal time in North American history. It is the story of two youths, one a Huron and the other French, whose lives helped shape historic New France and modern Canada.

Filmed on location at the historical sites of Ska-Nah-Doht and Port Royal, it was possible to use implements and settings characteristic of the times. Thanks to the collaboration of local Indian and Acadian communities, masks, facial designs and clothing have been recreated in meticulous detail. The Micmac costumes were lent by the Nova Scotia Museum.

## Related Films

### The Voyageurs

Recreating the life of the fur traders of 1805, this film accompanies six adventurers as they paddle up the St. Lawrence, following a trading route fraught with danger and excitement.

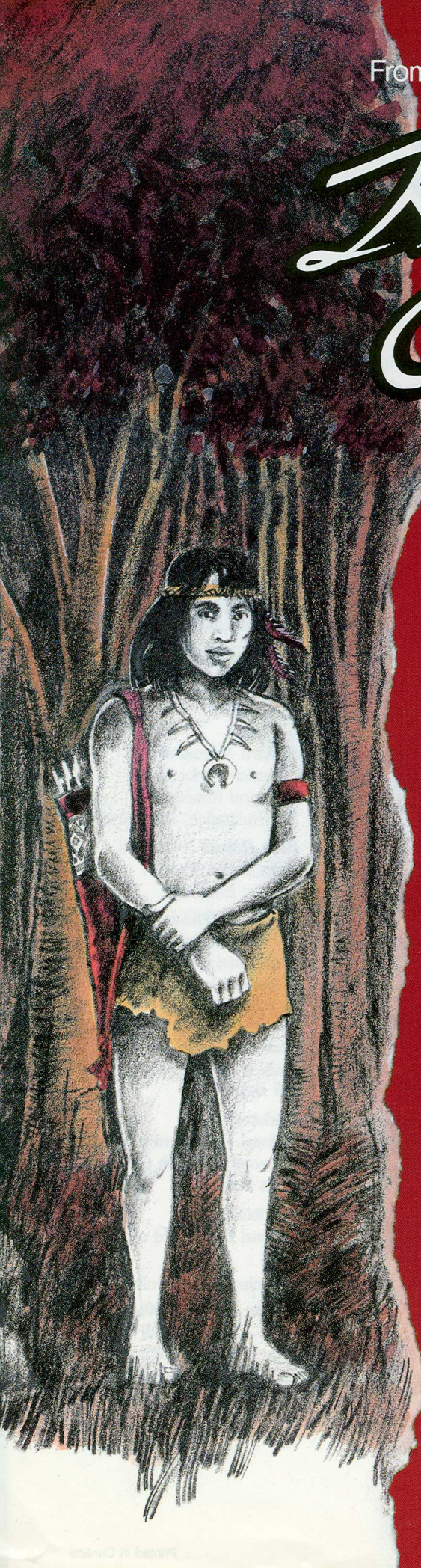
### Dreams of a Land

Drawing from the journals of the explorer Samuel de Champlain, this film imagines Champlain in 1635 looking back over his life and adventures.



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# Rendezvous Canada, 1606

## Historical Note

Rendezvous Canada, 1606 is set at the dawn of the European settlement of North America, recreating daily life at Cahiague, Huronia in what is now southcentral Ontario, Canada and at Port Royal in Acadia, now Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Deep in the interior, the Huron Indians had not yet met the white people; but through their sophisticated trading networks across the North American continent, they had heard of them, had obtained some of their tools in trade, and were eager to meet them. The Huron's trading partners and allies, the Algonkin, wanted the Huron to align with the French against their mutual enemy, the Iroquois.

On the east coast, the Micmac Indians and European fishermen had been in contact for well over a hundred years. At Port Royal, the French had a close relationship with the Micmac, who taught them many ways of survival. For the Micmac, the French provided a powerful ally against their tribal enemies to the west and south.

## The Film

At Cahiague, we meet Andashee, the son of a Huron Chief, and catch a glimpse of 17th-century native life. Andashee talks about the things that matter to him: his people's closeness to nature, and their relationships to other tribes. He also expresses his burning desire to meet a white-skinned person, and relates a dream his father had about an object that reflected things as clearly as water. He is excited about the dream because the Shaman interpreted it as a portent of change. We accompany Andashee on his first long trading voyage to strange territory, that of the Algonkin. Andashee is amazed when, among the tools he and his people receive in exchange for their corn, he sees the mysterious object of his father's dream. Later, he tells of a momentous longhouse meeting that would finally lead to his meeting of a white person.

At Port Royal, Charles de Biencourt talks about his excitement at being in the New World, despite the harshness of the winters. He goes out with Champlain on charting expeditions, and enjoys watching him work on his maps. He also spends time with the Micmac, and is learning their language. Biencourt describes how much his people are helped by the Micmac. Through his eyes, we witness two profoundly different cultures attempting to understand each other's ways. When a funeral service is performed for a French victim of scurvy, Chief Membertou and some of his people watch with curiosity from the sidelines. At the banquet called the "Order of Good Cheer" (a tradition started that winter by Champlain to boost morale), Membertou is given a place of honor at the table. Biencourt tells about his growing love for Acadia, and for the Micmac Chief, and voices his doubts about Sieur Marc Lescarbot's wish to convert Membertou to Christianity.

Designed to reflect contemporary approaches to the teaching of history, the film highlights the native way of life prior to contact with the Europeans, and the early influences these distinct cultures had on each other. Common to the film's parallel stories is the theme of the Indian impact on French explorations and settlement. The contrasting social structures, mores, clothes and artifacts become valuable adjuncts to understanding the two societies, and how each felt standing on the threshold of the other's world.

## Related Films

The Voyageurs, Dreams of a Land

## Suggested Audience

Students of Social Studies, American Indian Studies, and History in upper elementary, intermediate and secondary levels (grades 5-10).

## Discussion Questions

1. Why did Charles de Biencourt come to the new world?
2. Why did Andashee want to meet the white people?
3. Note the number of languages in the film.
4. What differences did you notice between the different tribes?
5. What did you learn about the traditional trade systems?
6. Why do you think Lescarbot wanted to convert Membertou, the Micmac Chief, to Christianity? Discuss possible reasons why Membertou did not seem to attempt to convert Lescarbot to his beliefs.
7. Discuss the different material cultures of the time.

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*Marcel Malacket*  
Original Music  
*Chris Crilly*  
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*Hans Peter Strobl*  
*Adrian Croll*  
Research  
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*Canadian Parks Service*  
*Historical Research,*  
*The Habitation, Port Royal*  
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*Nova Scotia Museum*  
*Micmac Ethnology*  
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*Huron Archaeology*  
*and Ethnology*  
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*Normand Godin, French*  
*Bernard Francis, Micmac*  
Producer  
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VHS: 113C 0188 001  
Beta: 114C 0188 001  
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