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**Level: Grades 3-5**

**Subjects:** Visual and Performing Arts

**Skills:** Collaborating, cooperating, collecting data, following directions, explaining, describing, making a plan, following a plan, writing

## Lesson 3: European Trappers and Traders

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Christopher Columbus did not sail as far north as Maine. But just a few years after his first voyage to our continent, other European explorers visited the shores of New England. Sent by kings and businessmen, these ships from England, Portugal, France, and Spain scouted the bays and natural harbors of the region. Some were trying to find a sea passage that would take them toward the riches of Asia. Others had been sent to discover and claim riches that this land had to offer. A few ventured inland, sailing up the Penobscot River or traveling over land to investigate Maine's forests and learn what treasures they might hold.

It was not until 1604 when the first European settlement was established by French trappers and traders on the banks of the St. Croix River. Other outposts and forts soon followed.

The trappers and traders had many uses for fiber. They could string together snares and trap lines to catch small animals or could use the fiber to bind together animal pelts to be traded. They even could fashion finger-crocheted belts to hold their trousers up!

