

37 MILLION YEARS & COUNTING:

A SHORT HISTORY OF BEAVERS



~ FRANCES BACKHOUSE ~

Beavers of the Past

Beavers of the Past

Castoroides

1.4 million years BP to 10,000 years BP



Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre

Beavers of the Past

Castoroides

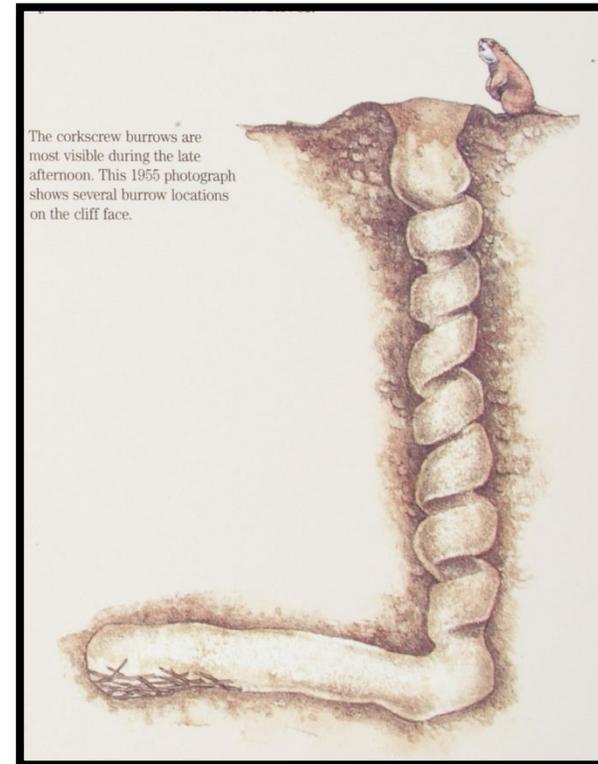
1.4 million years BP to 10,000 years BP



Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre

Paleocastor

Approx. 22 million years BP



The corkscrew burrows are most visible during the late afternoon. This 1955 photograph shows several burrow locations on the cliff face.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Beavers of the Past

Dipoides

Approx. 5 to 2.5 million years BP



Beavers of the Past

Dipoides

Approx. 5 to 2.5 million years BP



Canadian Museum of Nature

First wood-cutting beavers

At least 24 million years BP



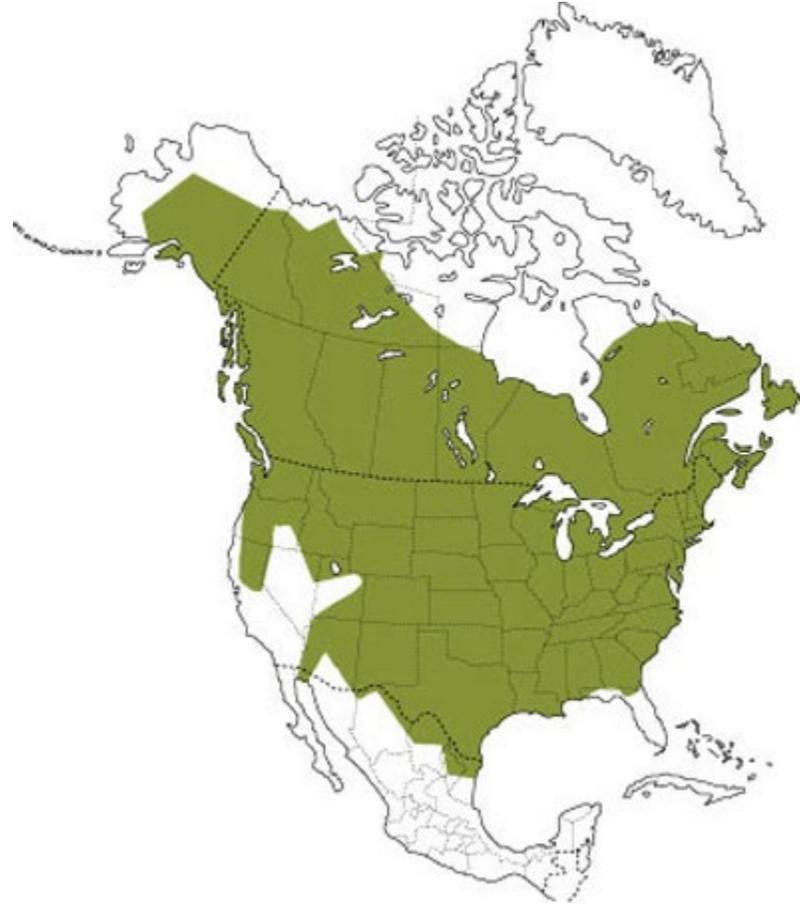
Beavers of Today

Castor fiber
(Eurasian)

Castor canadensis
(North American)



Castor canadensis - Historic range (circa 1500)



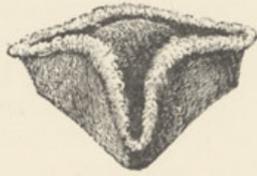
First Peoples & Beavers



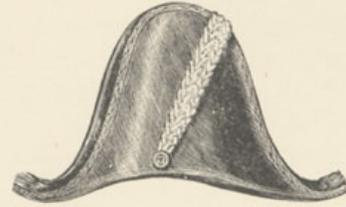
Dene moccasins trimmed with beaver fur



Chief Wiah's
house pole
with Haida
Beaver crest



"CONTINENTAL,"
COCKED HAT.
(1776)



"NAVY"
COCKED HAT.
(1800)



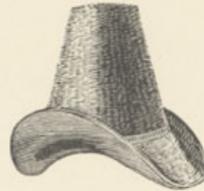
ARMY. (1837)



CLERICAL.
(Eighteenth Century)

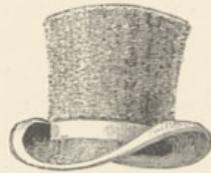


(THE WELLINGTON.)
(1812)



(THE PARIS BEAU.)
(1815)

CIVIL.



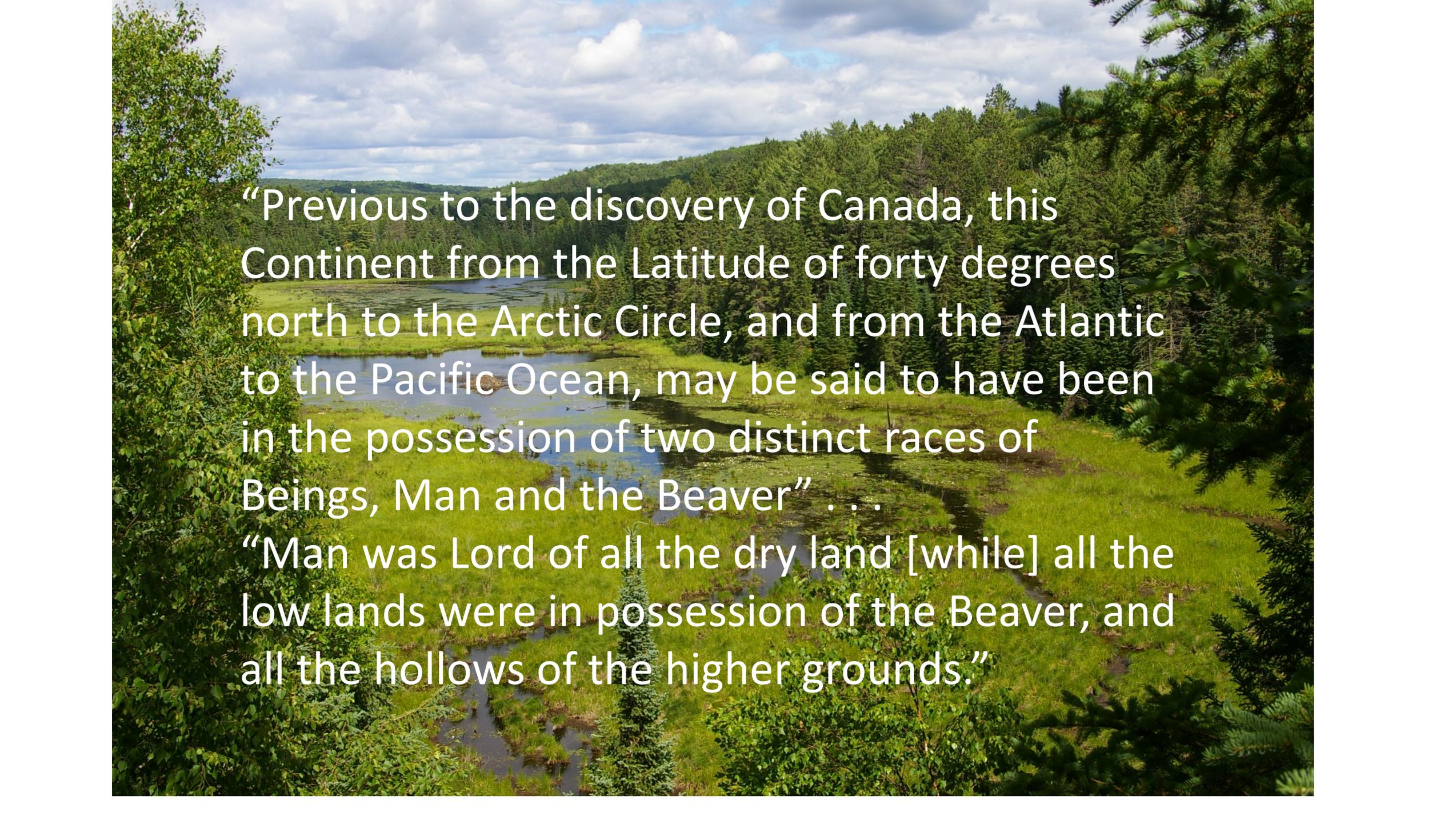
(THE D'ORSAY.)
(1820)



(THE REGENT.)
(1825)

MODIFICATIONS OF THE BEAVER HAT.

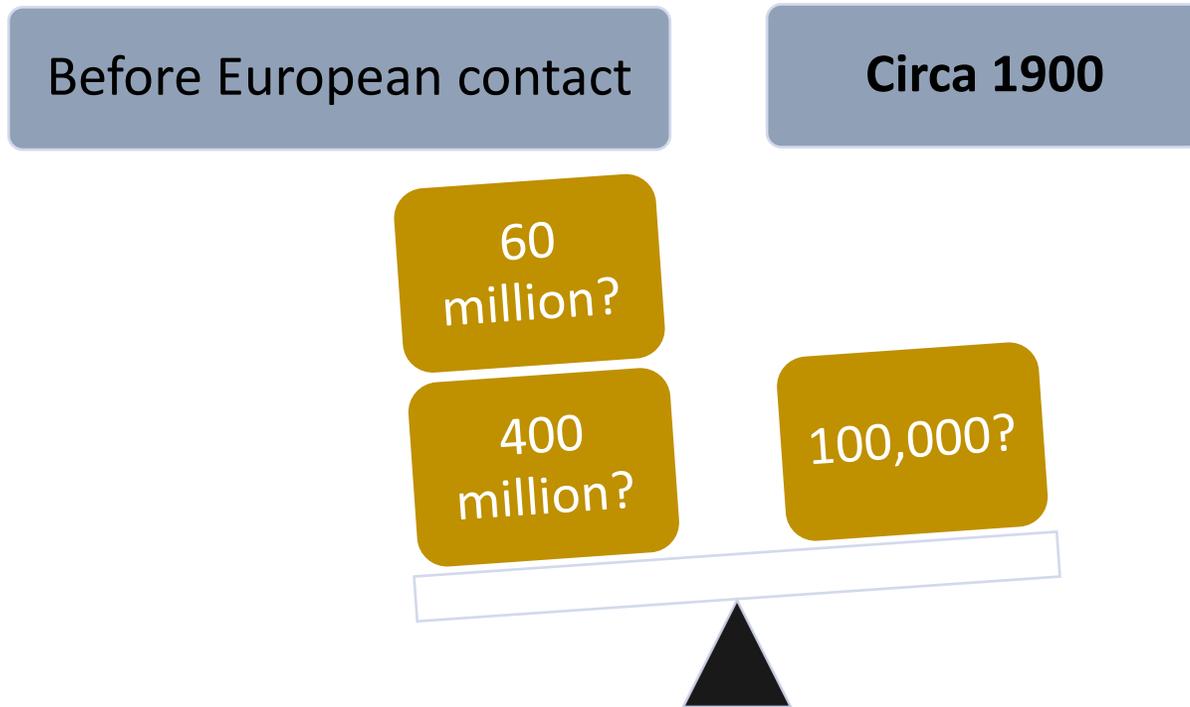




“Previous to the discovery of Canada, this Continent from the Latitude of forty degrees north to the Arctic Circle, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, may be said to have been in the possession of two distinct races of Beings, Man and the Beaver” . . .

“Man was Lord of all the dry land [while] all the low lands were in possession of the Beaver, and all the hollows of the higher grounds.”

North America's beaver population





CANTOR FERRE AMERICAITUS, LINN.
AMERICAN BEAVER.

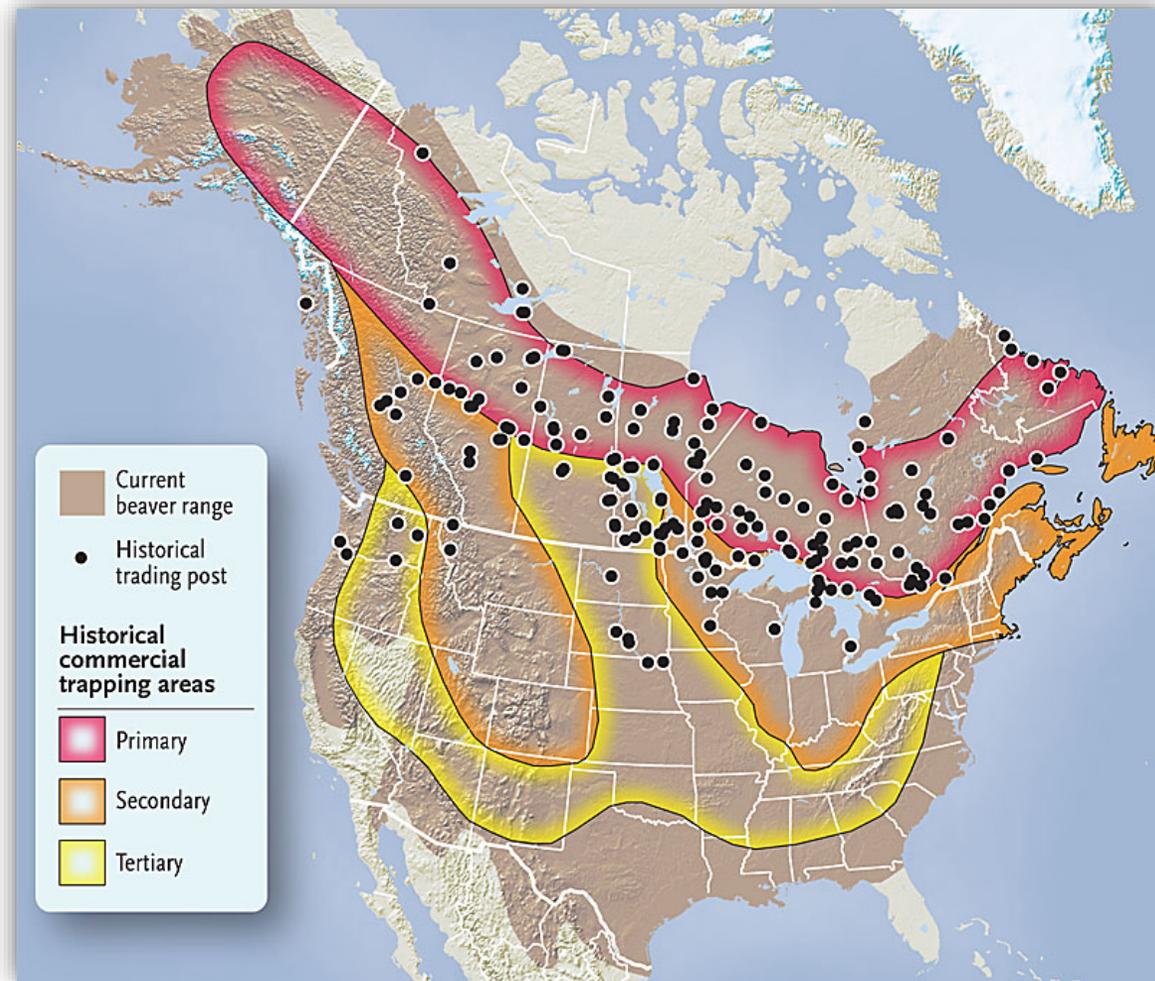
Painting by John James Audubon



How did we manage to kill off
so many beavers
in such a short time?

CANZON FERRE AMERICAITUS, LINN.
AMERICAN BEAVER.

The rolling fur-trade frontier



Map: *Canadian Geographic*

Gold-rush mentality



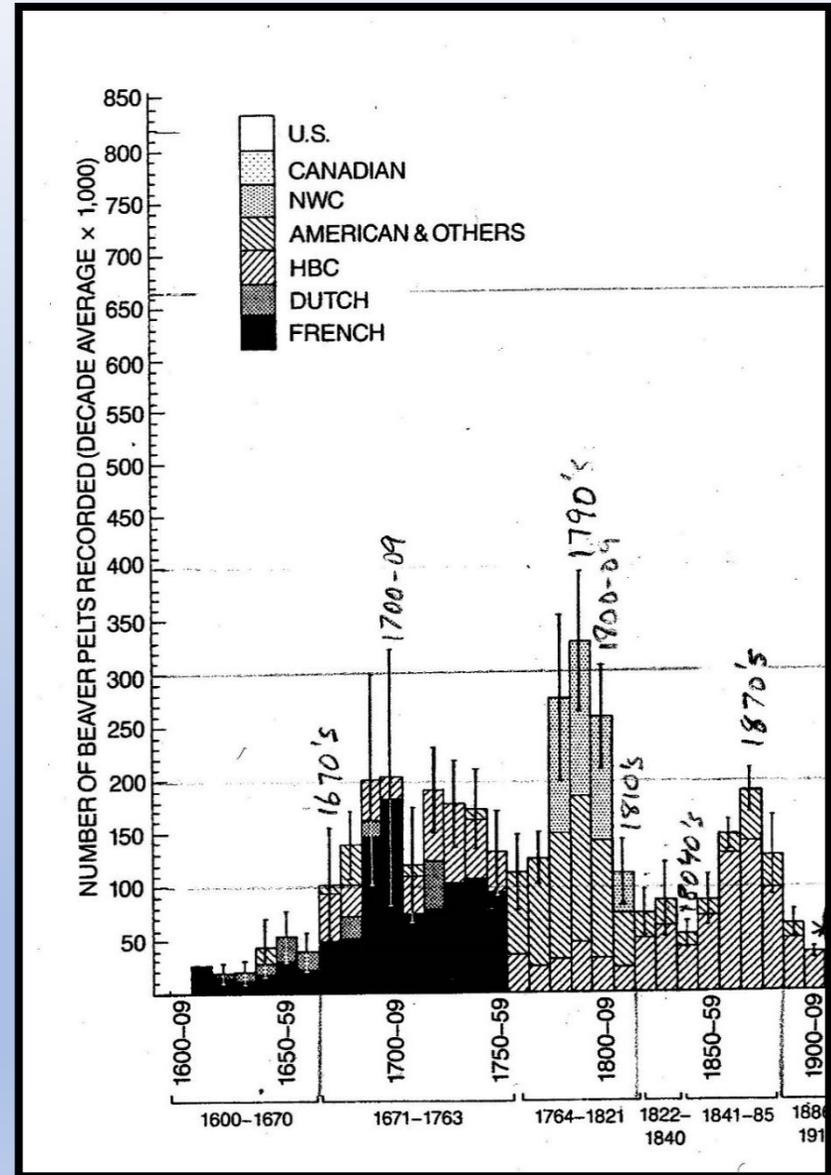
Photo credit:
Library & Archives Canada

Technological advances



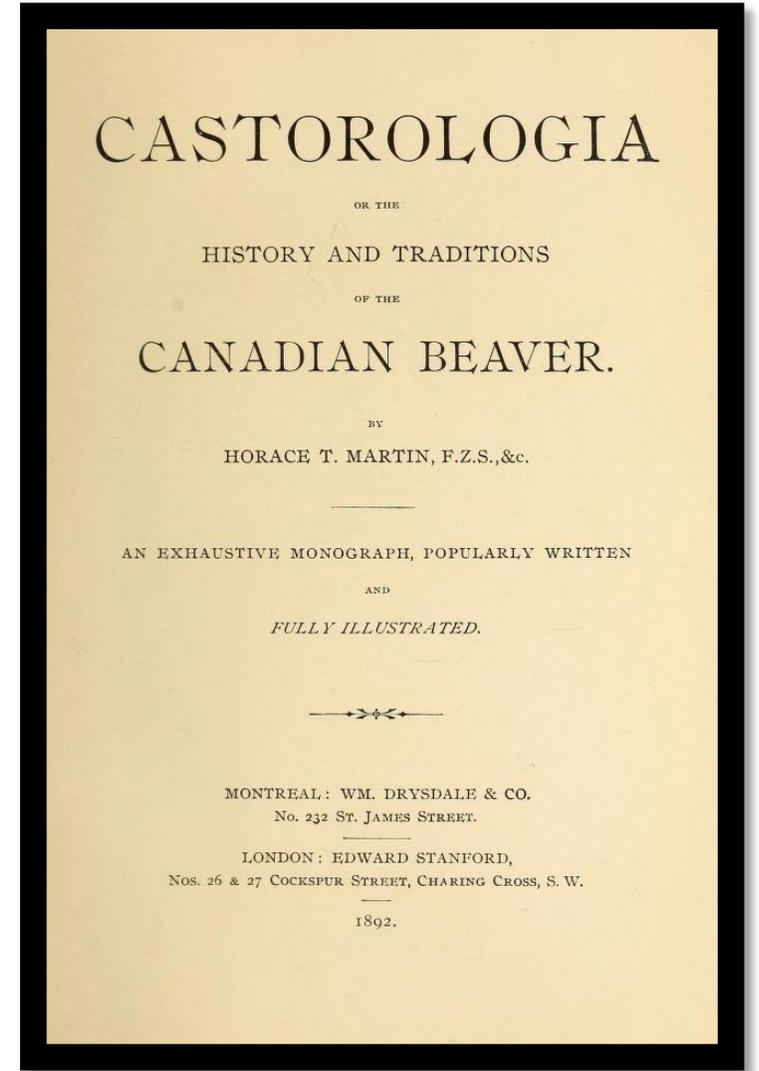
Average annual harvest of beaver pelts in North America (by decade)

Graph: *Furbearer Harvests in North America, 1600-1984* by Novak et al. (Ontario Trappers Association, 1987)



*“As to the ultimate
destruction of the beaver no
possible question can exist.”*

– Horace T. Martin,
author of *Castorologia* (1892)





Canadian Museum of History



Photo credit: Pierre Bolduc

Regulatory changes



Photo credit:
36758 Library & Archives Canada

Capacity for resilience

Photo credit: Chuck Garrett



Reintroductions



Photo credit: Ernest Lindsay
USDA Forest Service, 1936
379023



37 million years of beaver history:
What does this mean to us today?



Beavers have been engineering
North America's landscapes and waterways
for a very long time.



Photo credit: Parks Canada



Sculpture: Sandy Visse

Eliminating beavers hurt ecosystems and species throughout North America.



What we didn't know, we couldn't understand.



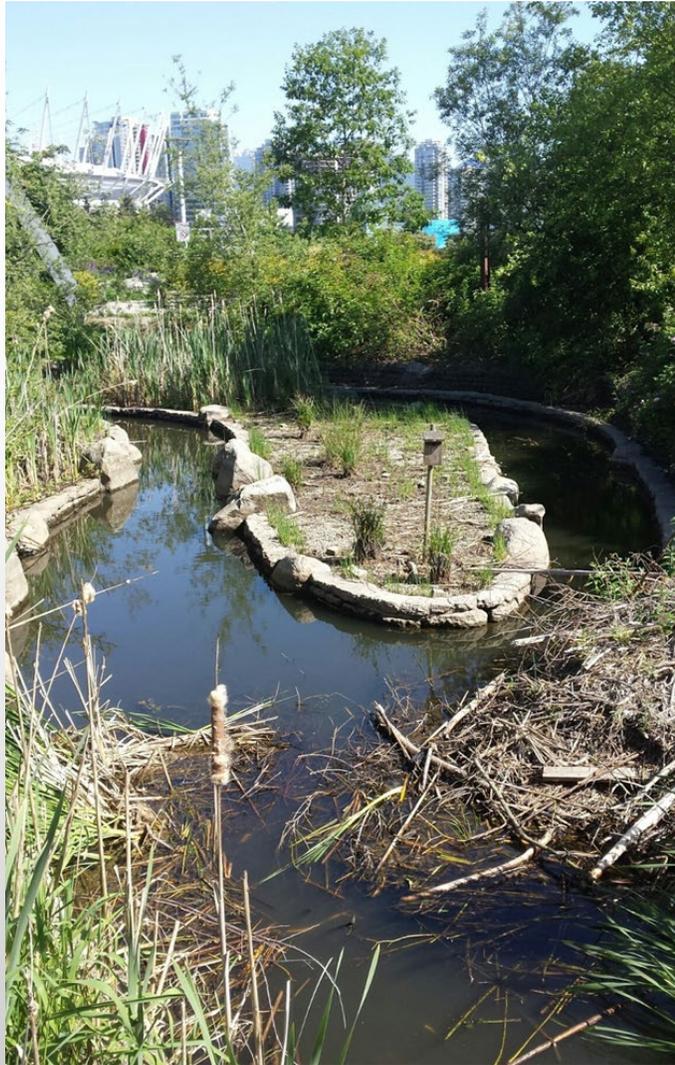
Human-beaver conflicts are mostly disputes about territorial ownership and use.



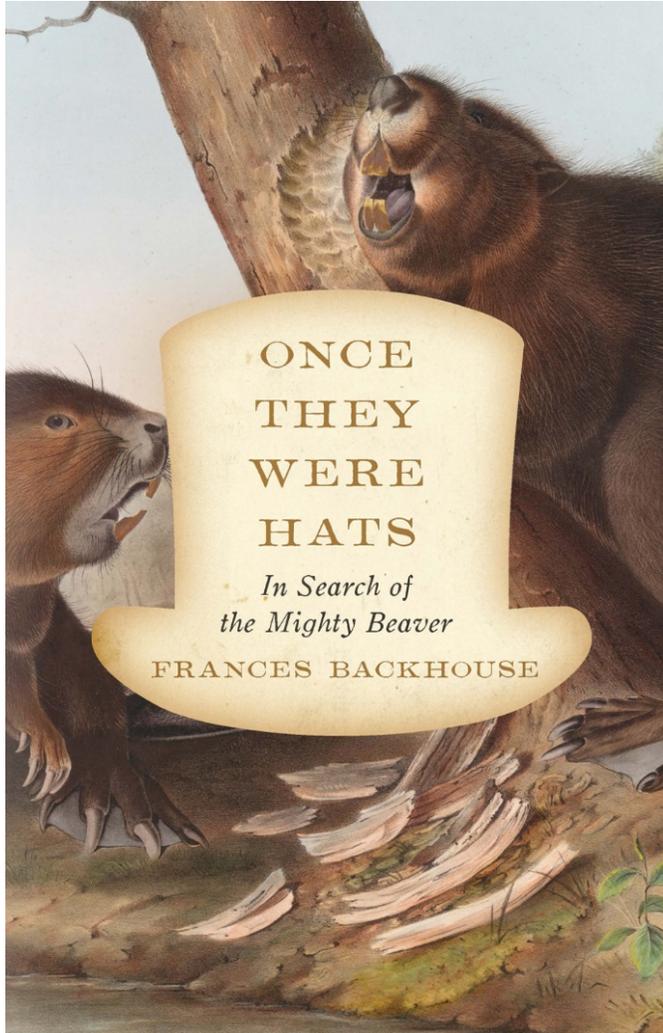
Beavers are here for the long haul,
so we might as well learn how to
get along with them.



PHOTO: DOUG KNUTSON



**CO-EXISTENCE
MEANS
EVERYONE WINS**



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www.facebook.com/MightyBeaver