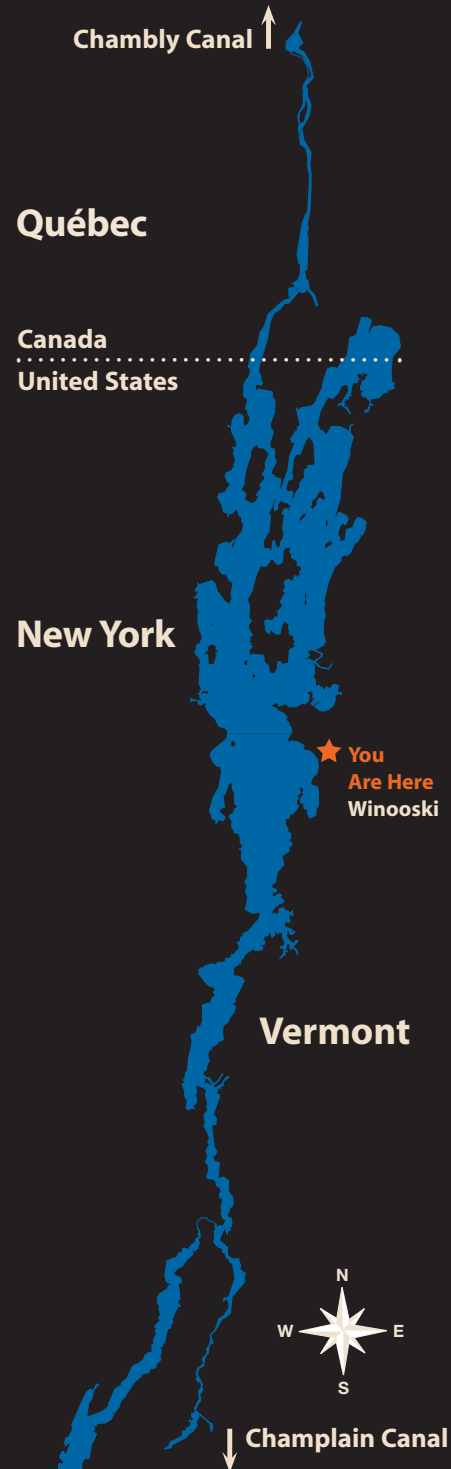
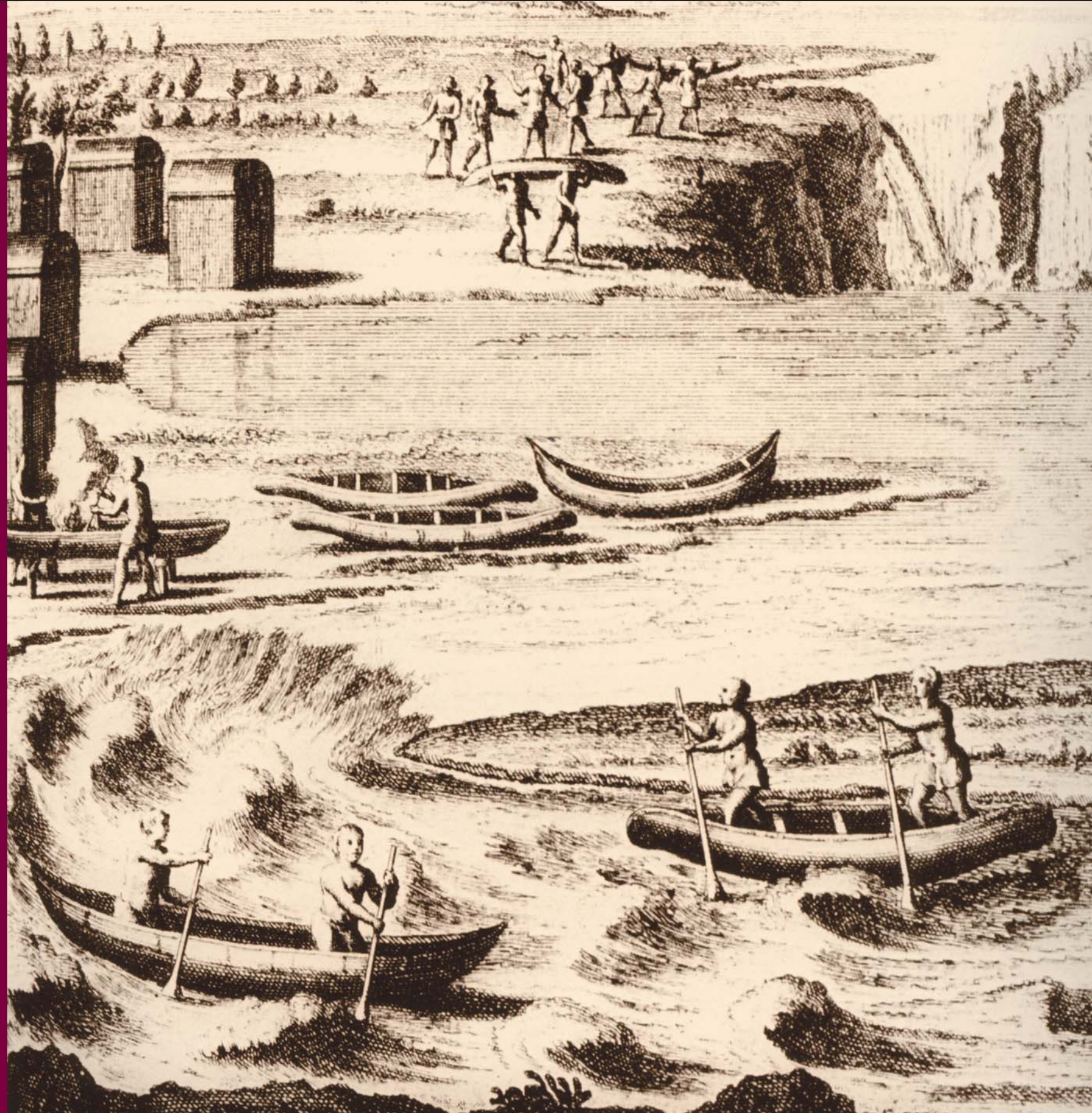
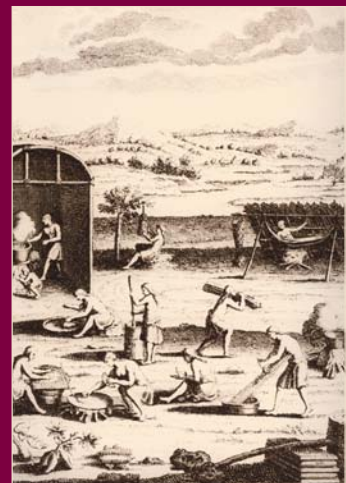


Native Americans and Winooski



Imagine a time machine taking us back to this spot 500 years ago. We would see a deep, rocky waterfall (now hidden under the ponded area behind the *Winooski One* hydroelectric dam), an extensive forest of tall pine trees, and small fields of corn, squash and tobacco. Closer examination would reveal traces of smoke rising from the simple wooden huts of a band of Western Abenakis. In the spring and summer Abenakis farmed on the rich soil of the Intervale, both above and below the falls, and fished for salmon in the teeming waters of the Winooski. In late autumn, hunters and their families moved to higher ground in search of moose and deer. With the onset of winter the Abenakis returned to their homes along the Winooski to await the return of spring.



We know from early French documents that an Abenaki village called *Winooskik* existed on the lower Winooski River. The name came from an Indian word meaning “onion river land,” because of a leek-type onion that grew on the river’s banks. Due to disease and almost constant war between the English and the French the village was abandoned by 1700. Its exact location is unknown. Perhaps some day a developer’s backhoe or a gardener’s shovel will unearth the site. Echoes of this Abenaki heritage remain in the name of the river and city. (All images courtesy of the Vermont Historical Society.)

