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Report on Jacques Cartier

# Jacques Cartier was a French navigator and explorer who was born in 1491 and died in 1557. He was the first European to travel in lance in North America and claimed what is now known as Canada for the Kingdom of France. He improved his social status by marrying a leading member in an aristocratic family. Cartier’s good name is recognized in his birthplace Saint-Malo by its frequent appearance in baptismal records as godfather or witness.

Jacques Cartier is important for his three major North American voyages. The first voyage King Francis I of France decided in 1534 to send an expedition to explore the northern lands in the hopes of discovering gold, spices and a passage to Asia. Cartier traveled along the west coast of Newfoundland, discovered the Prince Edward Island, and explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence as far as Anitcosti Island. Having seized two residents, he sailed back to France.

Cartier’s report interested Francis I sufficiently for him to send Cartier back the following year to explore further. Guided by the two captured residents, he sailed up the St. Lawrence and got to Quebec where he established a base near an Iroquois village. He learned from the Iroquois that two rivers led further West to lands where gold, silver, spices and copper was plentiful. A harsh winter, combined with diseases, forced Cartier to sail back to France, but not before he captured some of the Iroquois chiefs.

The last voyage was considered a failure. What Cartier thought were diamonds and gold proved to be worthless. Winter was severe again. He could not maintain discipline of his men. There was also hostility with the Iroquois. The disappointment in this voyage was so great that France did not show any interest in exploring these new lands for half a century.

Cartier left a lasting impression on Eastern North America. He opened up the best waterway for the Europeans to explore North America. He founded and studied the resources of Canada and gave it its name. He was not, however, successful in his dealings with the Iroquois. Cartier was the first to acknowledge that the New World was a land mass separate from Europe and Asia. He is also considered one of the most conscientious explorers of the period.

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Works Cited

Wikipedia: Jacques Cartier, Wikimedia Foundation, 15 September 2024, 1:23 P.M., en.m.wikipedia.org. Accessed 12 September 2024.