



Jacques Cartier

Jacques Cartier was born on December 31, 1491 in Saint-Malo, Brittany – which would later become part of France. His career in exploration began in 1524, when he accompanied the Italian-born French explorer Giovanni da Verrazano on his explorations of the Atlantic Coast of Canada and the United States. The experience would prove valuable to Cartier’s explorations in the future.

In 1534, Cartier was commissioned by the King of France to find the fabled Northwest Passage through the continent of North America to Asia (the Indies). When Cartier reached the New World, he sailed around parts of Newfoundland and parts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On July 24, 1534, Cartier planted a cross with the words engraved, “Long Live the King of France” on the shores of Gaspé Bay in Quebec. Cartier claimed the region for France and kidnapped the two sons of an Iroquoian chief. Later in 1534, Cartier returned to France, believing he had found Asia.

In 1535, Cartier and 112 men (including the two kidnapped natives) left France for their return trip and sailed up the St. Lawrence River to the Iroquoian capital of Stadacona. He reached the location of modern-day Montreal (then called Hochelaga) on October 2, 1535, where rapids prevented him from continuing. Cartier believed the rapids were the last obstacle in his discovery of the Northwest Passage. Today, the town on the banks of the rapids is called Lachine, the French word for China.

Cartier and his crew were forced to spend the winter of 1535-1536 at Stadacona, where the snow was four feet deep. In addition, scurvy broke out among members of Cartier’s crew, though most were saved by ingesting a native remedy using the boiled bark of a white spruce tree. In early May of 1536, after enduring a brutal winter, Cartier returned to France with an Iroquoian chief who would tell the tale of the Kingdom of Saguenay, a mythical city said to be full of rubies, gold, and other riches.

In 1540, Cartier returned to the New World as Captain General of a colonization project. Nevertheless, Cartier set off with five ships down the St. Lawrence River for the purposes of finding the Kingdom of Saguenay and for starting a permanent settlement on the river. The site of the settlement was chosen near present-day Cap-rouge, Quebec and named Charlesbourg- Royal. Despite the forts built at the settlement, and the fact that Cartier’s men falsely believed they had discovered diamonds and gold, conditions deteriorated rapidly. The settlers had begun to starve and attacks by nearby Iroquoian Indians resulted in the deaths of at least 35 of them. Cartier abandoned the settlement in 1542 and the entire settlement disbanded by 1543. Cartier returned to France and died of an epidemic in 1557. Although he was unsuccessful in establishing a permanent settlement, Cartier’s explorations of the St. Lawrence River opened up the interior of Canada to further French exploration and eventual settlement.

1.) Where did Cartier travel on his first voyages?

- A. France
- B. Asia
- C. Canada and America
- D. Africa

2.) What did the King of France want Cartier to find in 1534?

- A. A new world
- B. the Northwest Passage
- C. Newfoundland
- D. America

3.) Which of the following accurately describes the places Cartier explored in the New World in 1534?

- A.) Newfoundland, British Columbia, and Quebec
- B. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Saguenay
- C. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, and Quebec
- D. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, and Asia.

4.) What did Cartier believe in 1534?

- A. He had found a new French settlement
- B. He would become King of France
- C. He had found Asia
- D. He had found Indian allies

5.) What did Cartier believe in 1535?

- A. He was close to finding the Northwest Passage
- B. He was close to starting a successful settlement
- C. He would never find the Northwest Passage
- D. That the local Indians were friendly.

6.) Which of the following is not true about the Winter of 1535-1536?

- A. Most of Cartier's crew died
- B. Many of Cartier's men came down with Scurvy
- C. Snow was four feet deep in places.
- D. A native remedy may have helped cure scurvy.

7.) In 1540, Cartier's main purpose(s) in returning to the New World was to...

- A. Start a permanent French colony
- B. Find the mythical city of Saguenay
- C. Discover riches such as gold and diamonds
- D. All of the above

8.) Which of the following best describes Cartier's colonization attempt?

- A. Hard to tell
- B. Completely unsuccessful
- C. Successful; French colonies would continue to thrive and grow
- D. Unsuccessful; but his explorations led the way for future French colonies.

9.) What does the word 'remedy' mean in the following sentence?

In addition, scurvy broke out among members of Cartier's crew, though most were saved by ingesting a native **remedy** using the boiled bark of a white spruce tree.

- A. Food
- B. A curative medicine
- C. Trap
- D. Agent

10.) Which of the following is the best title for this passage?

- A. A history of the Northwest Passage
- B. The first permanent French settlement in Canada.
- C. Jacques Cartier and Giovanni da Verrazano
- D. The Explorations of Cartier.