

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# EXPLORERS in a NEW WORLD

Part Four

Jacques Cartier Explores Lands for France



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From the deck of a ship, Jacques Cartier, a French seaman for more than twenty years, looked at the rocky shore ahead. “We’re too early to go into the bays,” he said to the ship’s mate. “Look at the ice piled up near the shore.”



It was the year 1534, and Cartier had sailed across the sea from France with two ships and sixty men. Many other ships had come that way before him filled with French fishermen, who liked to work off the shore of what is now Canada. But unlike the fishermen, Cartier had come to try to find a passage through North America to the sea that led to China.

“We’ll fish until the ice breaks,” he said. The men put the ship’s small boats into the water. When they had six barrels



of fish salted down, Cartier decided it was time to head into the bays.

They sailed south and then west through the strait named for John Cabot, who had sailed there thirty-three years earlier. They nosed their ship past Prince Edward Island and then north once more. One morning they saw a wide arm of water reaching west into the land.

“This could be the passage we’re looking for,” said Cartier. “We’ll sail into this bay.”

It was late July by then, and even the northern country was getting warm, for they named the bay Chaleur, which means warmth in French.

The men went ashore. They cut a tall tree and formed a great cross from its trunk. Cartier scratched letters onto a board. "Long live the King of France," he wrote, and they nailed the board to the cross. After the men had set the cross firmly into the ground, they sailed on to the west.

But by late summer, Cartier knew that



the bay was not a passage to the Pacific Ocean. The weather was growing stormy, and it was time to get back to France. Cartier sailed back across the Atlantic. He took two Native Americans with him.

In France, Cartier took the two Native Americans to show them to the king. "These men are from a land to the west of the fishing banks," he told the king. "There are arms of water reaching far into the land. The natives say that one of them goes to a great sea."