History of Quebec For Dummies

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• Trace the unique history of the French-Canadian heartland as it happened

• Appreciate Quebec’s rich culture

Éric Bédard, PhD

Foreword by Jacques Lacoursière
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Foreword

Historian Éric Bédard is an academic who knows how to make his subject accessible to everyone, an ability he demonstrates in *History of Quebec For Dummies*. By telling the story chronologically rather than using a thematic approach, he allows readers to “see” the evolution of Quebec, from the French regime to the present. All aspects of Quebec’s history are covered. Intended for a mass audience, the book aims for a better understanding of this part of the country that is always in search of itself and that, one day, through experience, will no doubt find its place in the world.

No one who has read *History of Quebec For Dummies* will be able to plead ignorance of the history of this Canadian province, which Canadian Prime Minister Louis Stephen Saint-Laurent described as similar to other provinces. “They say,” he declared in September 1954, “that the province of Quebec is not a province like the others. I do not share this opinion.” Needless to say, Premier Maurice Duplessis of Quebec did not agree with this statement.

The way Éric Bédard has divided Quebec history into periods will surprise those who are used to thinking of the 1960s and the election of the Liberals under Jean Lesage as the beginning of what is called the “Quiet Revolution.” Instead, the author highlights the coming to power of Adélaord Godbout, the Liberal premier who held office during World War II and whose achievements, although more or less forgotten today, were notable. The innovative nature of this interpretation is expressed in the title of this part of the book, “The Quiet Reconquest.” I agree with Éric Bédard on this point — and, indeed, on his interpretation of Quebec’s past as a whole. In my view, as in Bédard’s, the stage was set for rapid change to take place starting in 1960. Otherwise, the changes that Quebec would both enact and witness cannot be understood. In the traditional interpretation, it seems that everything changed overnight and Quebec suddenly entered into a new mode of civilization: Education took on a new face and the Catholic religion lost its importance. But these profound changes were in the making for a long time.

The book does not seek to present a sanitized history. You can see that especially in Part V, which asks the question “Province or country?” Here Bédard sets aside his political orientation, knowing full well that historians who openly take a position on the future of Quebec in their work will see their writings discredited. A historian is a prophet — but a prophet who looks to the past! Bédard has taken the wise precaution of avoiding prognostication on the future of Quebec.
Part VI focuses primarily on Quebec’s cultural life. Too often in a work of this kind, this aspect is skimmed over or even ignored. But not in *History of Quebec For Dummies*. Bédard looks at a variety of aspects of Quebec culture — including Michel Tremblay’s play *Les belles-sœurs*, which caused a scandal in Quebec in the late 1960s, and which continues to resonate with audiences, as the success of its 2012 revival in Paris demonstrates.

Few historians in recent years have ventured to write a comprehensive overview of the history of Quebec. Éric Bédard should be commended for having undertaken this task. He was certainly well prepared to do it. His presence in the media — television, radio, and newspapers — has made him a first-class communicator. You can read his *History of Quebec For Dummies* without running to the dictionary. The absence of footnotes makes the narrative easier to understand — everything is in the text. It follows the usual formula for history books in this series. The text is interspersed with inserts devoted to anecdotes and other specific points. Summaries further enhance the reader’s understanding of events.

Congratulations to historian Éric Bédard for bringing Quebec’s past to life, a colorful past where hope and despair followed each other in rapid succession. Quebec’s motto is “Je me souviens” (“I remember”). Reading *History of Quebec For Dummies*, you will find out why it is important to remember, and just what is it that you are remembering.

— Jacques Lacoursière

Historian and member of the Royal Society of Canada
Introduction

“Mon pays ce n’est pas un pays, c’est l’hiver!” (“My country is not a country, it’s winter”), sang the poet Gilles Vigneault.

Yes, Quebec is winter, snow, cold, piercing January winds. It’s the majestic St. Lawrence River and its many tributaries, crisscrossing the American continent. It’s the vast forests, the countless lakes, the beautiful countryside of Témiscamingue, Charlevoix, the North Shore, and the Gaspé Peninsula.

It’s also Quebec City, the *vieille capitale*, perched above the river on Cap Diamant, its face turned to the shores of Europe. And, of course, Montreal, Quebec’s inventive, creative metropolis, the leading French city of the New World, a meeting place and a crossroads of cultures, the nerve center of a young nation.

But most of all, Quebec is a people — brave, stubborn, and determined. A people that, from its first days in the New World, had to be strong-willed, hardy, and courageous to face the rigors of the Quebec winter, clear the land by moonlight, raise large families, explore a vast continent, survive Iroquois attacks and the hostility of the American colonies, and later withstand the greed of wealthy merchants and the turmoils of the Industrial Revolution and the Depression of the 1930s.

This great adventure is the story that’s told in the pages that follow. It’s a story of resistance and affirmation, marked by resilience and yet haunted by the frustration of having to start over. The story of a people that came through trials and tribulations and overcame dejection and resignation. The story of a dream, the dream of French America, and of the crucible of the British Conquest. Most of all, it’s the story of a long and patient reconquest through which Quebecers took back their territory, their economy, and their political life.

Quebec’s motto is “*Je me souviens*” (“I remember”). Unfortunately, too many Quebecers seem to look at their past as a demoralizing “*Grande noirceur*” (“great darkness”) that holds little of interest for the present and the future. Nothing could be further from the truth. Quebec history is rich, fascinating, and often inspiring, filled with surprising turns and larger-than-life personalities.

This is the story that will unfold as you read this book.
About This Book

In this book, I follow the thread of Quebec’s development, identifying the turning points and explaining the underlying forces at work. I tell the story in strict chronological order and provide profiles of the most important personalities. The history of Quebec was made by men and women, people whose ideas were shaped by their time. Did these people, with their passions and their dreams, sometimes make mistakes? Maybe. But my goal is to avoid being too cynical or making hasty moral judgments; instead, I try to understand their actions and explain their decisions.

The history of Quebec is one piece of the history of the world. Its key moments can be explained only in relation to the great discoveries of the 16th century, the Catholic Counterreformation of the 17th century, the geopolitical tensions of the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, and the world wars of the 20th century, along with the development of the welfare state in the West and the decolonization movement of the 1960s. You can’t understand what was happening in Quebec without keeping an eye out for major events taking place in France, Britain, the United States, and other parts of the world.

What You’re Not to Read

You can safely skip anything marked by a Technical Stuff icon. (For more on icons, see “Icons Used in This Book,” later in this Introduction.)

You can also skip sidebars, which are the gray boxes of text. The information in sidebars is interesting, but not absolutely critical to your understanding of the topic at hand.

Foolish Assumptions

I don’t make a tremendous amount of assumptions about you, the reader of this book, but I do make a few:

✓ You aren’t a historical researcher. You’re just someone with an interest in the history of Quebec.
✓ You may have grown up in Quebec but feel you have a poor knowledge of its history, either because you’ve forgotten large chunks of what you learned in high school or because you never learned it in the first place.
Introduction

✓ You may have recently moved to Quebec, and you’re looking for a better understanding of your new home.
✓ You may be traveling to Quebec and want to know the history of what you’ll see when you get there.

How This Book Is Organized

*History of Quebec For Dummies* is divided into seven parts, comprising 25 chapters. Here’s an overview of what each part covers.

**Part I: New France (1524–1754)**

In the earliest part of its history, Quebec was called New France. The young colony sometimes inspired extravagant dreams — dreams of a French and Catholic America. The impressive figures who walked across the stage of New France gave flesh to those dreams: Samuel de Champlain, Marie Guyart, Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. In Part I, I explain why France wanted to explore the New World in the 16th century. Before the arrival of the French, what is now Quebec was inhabited by Aboriginal peoples, either nomadic or semi-sedentary. A number of these peoples made alliances with the first French settlers who founded the towns of Quebec and Montreal. I introduce the most important explorers, describe the institutions of New France, and seek to understand why this vast colony was so sparsely populated.

**Part II: Conquered but Still Alive (1754–1867)**

The Anglo-American colonies had larger populations than New France, and they looked covetously at the Mississippi Valley and France’s possessions in North America. In Part II, I recount the main events of the war in which British and American armies conquered New France. After the conquest, the Canadiens of the St. Lawrence Valley were confined to a small reserve called the “Province of Quebec.” A few years later, the American colonies, now in revolt against Britain, again cast their eyes on this territory. After the American War of Independence, Quebec became host to the “Loyalists,” immigrants from the south who wanted to remain faithful to the British crown and demanded real British institutions, which came into being in 1791. But the domination of these institutions by English merchants was a source
of discontent among the French-speaking majority, which established a party that rebelled against the British metropolis in 1837–1838. Repression of these rebellions was followed by the Act of Union and a major religious revival in the mid-19th century.

**Part III: Survival (1867–1939)**

In 1867, Quebec became a Canadian province. Why did Quebecers agree to this new confederation? What would be the powers of the new province of Quebec? What would be the place of francophones in the new country called Canada? In Part III, I answer these complex questions as simply as possible.

A fundamental event in bringing to light the place of francophones in Canada was the hanging of the Métis leader Louis Riel in 1885. Two important political figures, Honoré Mercier and Wilfrid Laurier, came to power as a result of this event. This was also the period of the Industrial Revolution, which for French Canadians was a time of economic inferiority and large-scale emigration to the United States. This economic inferiority was accentuated by the Depression of the 1930s. While the Quebec government made efforts to bring the Depression to an end, reform movements brought a new party into being.

**Part IV: The Quiet Reconquest (1939–1967)**

The reform program instituted by the government of Adélard Godbout (1940–1944) and postwar prosperity helped Quebecers regain their confidence and emerge from the long period when their main focus was survival. However, in 1944, they elected a conservative government headed by Maurice Duplessis. Returned to power repeatedly, Duplessis ruled Quebec with an iron hand, fiercely resisted federal intrusion into provincial fields of jurisdiction, brutally repressed strikes, and praised the virtues of rural, traditional Quebec. The election of the “équipe du tonnerre” (“hell of a team”) in June 1960 was a turning point. A new political generation gave Quebec a healthcare system that provided free medical care and an education system that better prepared Quebecers to meet the challenges of postindustrial society. Above all, it endowed Quebec with a modern state that would make it possible for the French-speaking majority to catch up economically.
Part V: Province or Country? (1967 to Today)

The late 20th century was completely dominated by the debate over Quebec’s political status. Some people demanded a thorough reform of Canadian federalism leading to Quebec’s recognition as an “associated state” or a “distinct society.” Others, who sometimes compared Quebec with Algeria, Cuba, or Vietnam, dreamed of building a sovereign, independent country. A series of political movements and parties took up the cause of Quebec independence. Among these was the Parti Québécois, which came to power in 1976 and held an initial referendum in May 1980, in which Quebecers rejected “sovereignty association.” In the wake of the referendum, negotiations began in an effort to achieve greater recognition and respect for Quebecers within Canada. This constitutional saga culminated in the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in June 1990. With English Canadians having rejected Quebec’s minimum demands, Quebecers founded a new federal party, the Bloc Québécois, and once again elected the Parti Québécois to form the Quebec government in 1994. The new Parti Québécois government called a second referendum for October 30, 1995, which the No side won by a razor-thin margin. This close call sent a shockwave through the rest of Canada. The question remains unresolved.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

In Part VI, we look in turn at ten personalities, ten symbols, and ten landmarks, all of them expressive of the history of Quebec. Quebec comes alive through some of the dimensions of its popular heroes, its culture, and its geography. Why do Quebecers swear the way they do? What’s the origin of the arrow sash? When did Percé Rock lose its second arch? Where did the first inhabitants of the Magdalen Islands come from? And what about Louis Cyr, Rocket Richard, and Leonard Cohen? These sketches, brief though they are, cast light on additional layers of Quebec history.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout the book, icons appear in the margins. Each icon helps you see at a glance what kind of information is presented in the passage beside it. Using the icons, you can focus on the kind of material you’re especially interested in or come back to a point you’re looking for. Here’s what the icons in this book mean:
The broad sweep of history is peppered with seemingly insignificant incidents and idiosyncrasies that reveal something about a person, event, or phenomenon. Anecdotes remind us that this is “human” history!

Paragraphs marked by this icon are moments that imprinted themselves in Quebecers’ consciousness. Those who were there have never forgotten these moments. In the history of any society, key dates are hooks that give us entry points into the flow of time.

This icon marks places where I focus on one of the many personalities who have left their mark on Quebec. What were their family origins and social background? What ideas did they hold dear? What motivated their political and social actions?

This icon points out an event or element in Quebec history that is especially important and should be remembered.

This icon marks information that’s interesting, but not essential to your understanding of the subject at hand.

**Where to Go from Here**

If you want a full picture of the history of Quebec, you can always start at the very beginning and read through to the end. But you can dip into whichever parts interest you most. Use the Table of Contents and Index to find the subjects that fascinate you. Or just open the book at random and start reading. You’re sure to find fascinating stories of impressive men and women who made Quebec what it is today.

Want to read further about Quebec? Head to [www.dummies.com/go/historyofquebecfd](http://www.dummies.com/go/historyofquebecfd) where I list a number of other resources you can dive into, including a chronology of important events and a map of the province.
Part I
New France
(1524–1754)

The 5th Wave
By Rich Tennant

1534—Jacques Cartier discovers Canada and starts fur trading with the Iroquois Indians.

Winter, 1535—Sadly, Cartier's men never made contact with the other tribe who traded in space heaters.
A painful birth and difficult beginnings. . . . France got off to a late start in exploring the New World. Like the other European powers, it initially sought a route to Asia. After some hesitation, Quebec was chosen as the capital of New France. This early settlement was established by Samuel de Champlain, who forged links of trust and friendship with the Montagnais, Algonquians, and Hurons. But it wasn’t until the time of Louis XIV, his minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, and the intendant Jean Talon that the colony truly began to develop.

In the late 17th century, a new people made its appearance. These “Canadiens” never gave up on their homeland, despite repeated attacks by the Iroquois and the growing appetite of the Anglo-American colonies. In addition to clearing new land, they explored the Great Lakes, paddled down the Mississippi, founded Louisiana, and went as far west as the Rockies.
Chapter 1

Looking for China — and Finding Quebec! (1524–1610)

In This Chapter
▶ Exploring the New World
▶ Looking at the role of the French in founding Quebec

The New World nation of Quebec was founded by adventurers, missionaries, and women and men who wanted to improve their lot and dreamed of a better world. When they crossed the ocean in the 15th and 16th centuries, Europe was experiencing an unprecedented period of growth. Portugal, Spain, and England were seeking new routes to China. Taking advantage of new scientific discoveries, sailors set out to sea, crossed the Atlantic, discovered America, and founded colonies.

France, 16th-century Europe’s leader in wealth and population, made the first move to colonize Quebec. In this chapter, I fill you in on when and why French leaders decided to set out for the New World, the circumstances that fed their curiosity about these vast western lands, and the ambitions that drove the French state. I also explain what the early explorers discovered (hint: they weren’t the first people there) and what kind of relationship developed between the French and the indigenous peoples. Finally, I tell you why the French decided to settle in the St. Lawrence Valley and found Quebec.

Setting Out to Conquer the West

In the 16th century, all western European powers were curious about the New World. This desire to travel and look beyond their shores took shape in the context of the Renaissance, an extraordinary and unprecedented period of artistic and intellectual growth and economic and political upheaval.
Part I: New France (1524–1754)

The Vikings: First explorers to the party

Well before the 16th century, the Vikings had explored the shores of the American continent. This great nation of conquering mariners originated in Scandinavia. They established settlements in Greenland that lasted three centuries, founding villages and erecting a bishop’s palace. Greenland was not very far from the shores of Newfoundland, and Vikings settled there around the year 1000 A.D. Their presence lasted several centuries, but they had completely abandoned Newfoundland by the time a later generation of Europeans decided to set out.

Why the Europeans wanted to explore

A combination of factors explains western Europeans’ sudden desire to explore a vast world:

 ✓ The fall of Constantinople: Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, was the gateway to Asia for Europeans. Caravans brought back silks, precious gems, and spices (which were used to preserve staple foods). Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, which spelled trouble for the Europeans: The gateway to Asia was now closed. To import these riches from the Orient again, new routes had to be explored to avoid Arab and Muslim peoples who were hostile to Christian Europe, and for good reason: Christians had repeatedly invaded their part of the world during the bloody Crusades of the Middle Ages.

 ✓ The search for gold: In the 15th century, a number of European cities experienced rapid growth. Paris, Naples, Venice, and Florence each had more than 100,000 inhabitants. With the economy flourishing, gold coins were increasingly required for commerce. Suppliers in North Africa and the Middle East wanted to be paid in hard cash. The problem: Gold mines supplying Europeans were running out. For growth to continue, new deposits had to be found, and the New World was a place to look.

Who went where

To find a new way of reaching Asia or to venture into distant lands to discover gold, technical innovation was vital. People needed more sophisticated methods of navigation, and they had to have faster and better ships that could accommodate large crews and heavy loads of food.
Chapter 1: Looking for China — and Finding Quebec! (1524–1610)

The Renaissance atmosphere prevailing in Europe gave rise not only to lively discussions among scholars but also to a variety of innovations that were useful to the great adventurers. They could now set out to sea for months at a time. No ambition was too great for the intrepid sailors, mostly of Italian origin, who staffed these ships. The race to Asia could begin!

**Portugal finds a route around Africa**

The Portuguese were the first to undertake this bold odyssey. Led by Henry the Navigator, the Portuguese discovered the Azores and explored the coast of Africa. In 1488, they rounded the Cape of Good Hope, opening the route to India. Ten years later, Vasco de Gama reached the Indian subcontinent.

**Spain discovers America**

These Portuguese successes led Spain, Portugal’s great neighbor and competitor, to follow suit. With the southern route already explored, the Italian navigator Christopher Columbus urged Spain to finance a westward expedition — a truly bold venture because the route was completely unknown.

But circumstances favored Columbus. In 1492, the Spanish monarchs defeated the Arabs and achieved full political union. On October 12 of that year, Columbus reached unknown territory. He was not in Asia, however, but in America. The Spaniards settled in and were soon exploiting the new continent’s gold.

**English incursions farther north**

These impressive Spanish conquests stirred envy in other countries. England also had ambitions of finding new ways to Asia, but by a northerly route. On May 2, 1497, Giovanni Caboto (called John Cabot by the English) left the port of Bristol. On June 24, he reached the shores of Newfoundland, planted an English flag, and took possession. He, too, thought he had arrived in Asia. He returned the following year but soon became disenchanted: These new lands offered plenty of fish and furs but very little gold or other precious metals.

**What they found when they arrived:**
**An inhabited New World**

Neither Spain nor England discovered a route to Asia. Between the Orient of their dreams and Old Europe lay a New World inhabited by a variety of unknown peoples.
The origins of “Homo americanus”

The earliest inhabitants of the New World were members of the species *Homo sapiens sapiens*. These bipeds were capable of producing tools and had a good knowledge of flora. Their presence in America resulted from two waves of immigration: They came from Asia across the Bering Strait or by sea along the west coast of the American continent in small boats, arriving about 15,000 years ago (or as long as 30,000 years ago, by some accounts) and settling mostly in South America. These migrants belonged to tribes that hunted herds of mammoths and buffalo.

About 5,000 years ago, a second wave of migrants followed the same route but settled in the northwest. This second wave arrived at the end of a long ice age estimated to have begun about 100,000 years earlier. For thousands of years, Quebec, along with the entire northeast of the continent, was covered with a thick layer of ice. With the ice receding, living in the more northerly regions was possible.

Number and diversity

At the time the first Europeans arrived, the American continent may have been inhabited by about 80 million people, most of whom lived in the south. The indigenous population of North America is thought to have been somewhere between 4 million and 9 million; of these, 500,000 to 2 million lived in Canada.

The first Europeans to arrive were immediately struck by the cultural diversity of the peoples they encountered. Most had their own languages, ancestral customs, and spiritual beliefs. Some nomadic people lived from hunting, fishing, and gathering. Subsistence for these people was easy in the summer but more difficult in the winter. Others were partly sedentary, combining cultivation of the soil with nomadic subsistence activities and living in large settlements. Rivalries for control of a resource or a territory often erupted between indigenous peoples. Wars sometimes set them violently against one another well before the Europeans arrived.

Although their customs were very different from those of the Europeans and their means of fighting were less sophisticated, they were neither bloodthirsty barbarians nor noble savages motivated solely by higher thoughts. The passions that moved them were similar to those of the Europeans.

Culture shock

The encounter between the Europeans and *First Nations* (the various indigenous people in Canada) produced a real shock, for both sides. To begin with, the Europeans came bearing illnesses that wiped out huge numbers of indigenous people, because they lacked the protective immunity to fight these
diseases. The Europeans suffered less from bacteriological shock, but many
died in adapting to the new continent, especially in the winter months.

The shock was also cultural. The Montagnais of northern Quebec thought
the first ships were floating islands, saw their sails as strange clouds, and
believed the first cannon shots were horrible thunderclaps. They were fas-
cinated by the hairiness of the Europeans, as well as by the wine they drank
while eating, which they initially thought was blood.

This culture shock also affected the Europeans, who saw more relaxed social
and sexual customs among the indigenous peoples and a more liberal way of
raising children. They also discovered a number of new products: tobacco,
maple sap, canoes, and snowshoes.

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**The three indigenous groups in Quebec**

When the Europeans arrived, three main indigenous groups shared the territory of
Quebec. Each of them was subdivided into tribes and occupied a specific part of the
territory. These three groups were as follows:

- **The Algonquians:** Made up of nomadic tribes, the Algonquian peoples were divided
  as follows: the Montagnais (or Innu) roamed along the north shore of the St. Lawrence
  as far as the St. Maurice River; the Cree lived south of James Bay; the Maliseet lived along
  the St. John River; the Odawa inhabited the Témiscamingue region and the area north of
  Lake Huron; the Algonquians proper covered an area along the north shore of the Ottawa
  and St. Lawrence rivers extending from the Témiscamingue region to west of the St.
  Maurice. Other Algonquian tribal groups lived outside Quebec’s current boundaries
  (such as the Mi’kmaq of the maritime provinces and the Ojibwa of Lake Superior).
  The French generally maintained good relations with these peoples.

- **The Iroquoians:** When Jacques Cartier
  arrived from France in 1535, Iroquoian tribes
  were settled at Stadacona (in what is now
  Quebec City) and Hochelaga (Montreal).
  In the latter part of the 16th century, the
  Iroquoian tribes abandoned these posts
  and settled farther south and west. When
  the French returned early in the 17th
  century, the Iroquoians had disappeared.
  Consisting mostly of semi-sedentary tribes,
  this major Aboriginal family included the
  Iroquois, divided into the Five Nations of the
  Iroquois Confederacy: Mohawks, Oneidas,
  Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. They
  lived in the areas around Lake Ontario and
  Lake Erie. The Hurons of the Great Lakes,
  with whom the French established close
  relations, were also part of the broader
  Iroquoian cultural family, as were the Pétuns
  and the Neutral, even though the Iroquois
  regarded them all as irreconcilable enemies.

- **The Inuit (or Eskimos):** Completely isolated
  from the two other Aboriginal families in
  Quebec and from the early French colonists,
  the Inuit (or Eskimos) lived in Labrador and
  the far north.
Finally, the Europeans brought firearms with them. These weapons transformed relationships and led to new wars. Even though the balance of power clearly favored the colonists from Old Europe, both First Nations and Europeans were transformed by this encounter. Confrontation with indigenous peoples was sometimes brutal. To establish their culture and religion, the Spanish massacred entire populations or reduced them to slavery. In comparison, the French, perhaps because they were fewer in number, adopted a more open attitude.

**France gets into the race**

Compared to Portugal and Spain, 16th-century France did not seem to be in any great hurry to find a new route to Asia. This was because its attention was turned more toward Italy and the Mediterranean, which remained the great trade crossroads of Europe. The Spanish conquest and the achievement of Magellan’s crew in circling the entire world in three years (1519–1522), discovering a passage between South America and Antarctica along the way, finally persuaded France to get into the race.

**Verrazzano’s exploration**

Financed by bankers in Lyon and backed by King Francis I, the Florentine sailor Giovanni da Verrazzano explored the Atlantic coast of North America in 1524. When he began his trip, the shores of South America, the Caribbean, Florida, and Newfoundland had been mapped. But the central part of North America’s Atlantic coast remained unknown. During his two-month expedition aboard the *Dauphine*, Verrazzano tried to find a route leading to “Cathay,” another name for China. Such a discovery would leapfrog what Magellan had found, enabling France to get back on top.

After reaching North Carolina in March, he headed north along the coast, setting foot on the continent several times. The land he discovered seemed to him “the most pleasant and the most favorable there could be for any type of crop.” He met indigenous peoples, regarding some of them as courteous and polite but others as barbaric and hostile. In political and economic terms, Verrazzano’s expedition was a failure. However, thanks to him, Europeans learned, as Verrazzano himself wrote, “this land or New World . . . forms an entity. It is not attached to Asia or to Africa. . . . This continent thus seems to be enclosed between the eastern sea and the western sea.”

**Jacques Cartier arrives in Gaspé**

This conviction on Verrazzano’s part did not convince everyone. The hope of finding a route to Asia persisted, and the riches of the new continent stirred