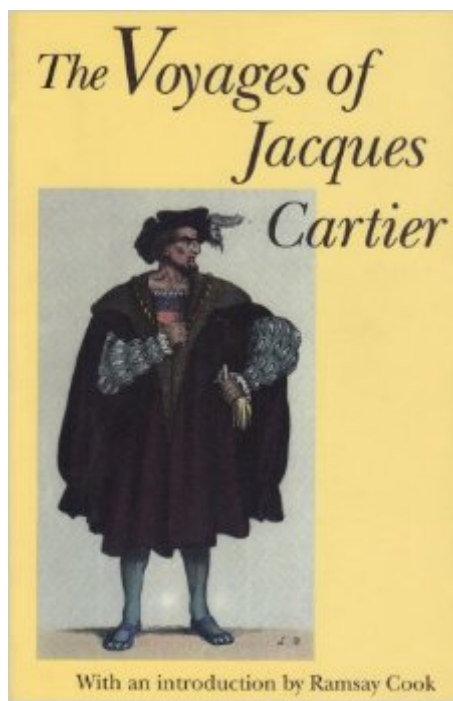


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The Voyages Of Jacques Cartier



Synopsis

Jacques Cartier's voyages of 1534, 1535, and 1541 constitute the first record of European impressions of the St Lawrence region of northeastern North America and its peoples. The Voyages are rich in details about almost every aspect of the region's environment and the people who inhabited it. As Ramsay Cook points out in his introduction, Cartier was more than an explorer; he was also Canada's first ethnographer. His accounts provide a wealth of information about the native people of the region and their relations with each other. Indirectly, he also reveals much about himself and about sixteenth-century European attitudes and beliefs. These memoirs recount not only the French experience with the Iroquois, but also the Iroquois' discovery of the French.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jacques Cartier provides a simply phenomenal amount of information on pre-European North America. Cartier led three expeditions to the New World, all of which took place in either the St. Lawrence River or the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. Basically all of Cartier's writings pertaining to the voyage are included in this book. His account of the first two expeditions are simply amazing, Cartier goes into great detail about the first contact between the Native Americans and his French crew. It is that which is most interesting about his writings, it can be seen how complex and incredibly difficult it was for these different people of two different worlds to interact and for each people to understand the values and culture of the other. The writings of the third voyage are a little bit disappointing, as much of the original work is gone and we do not learn about this expedition as thoroughly as we do the first two. One can also simply imagine Cartier sailing down the St. Lawrence

River, the first European ever to do so, and to imagine what this land was truly like before there was any European impact. Cartier makes detailed observations, having a keen eye for which land would be good for settlement, which land could be successful farmland and continual talks about the elusive land known as "Saguenay".

Here's another instance of an historical type thing that is better consumed as a Wikipedia article. This is a short book, not even 200 pages. And only 10 pages are worth reading. Everything else is dull geographical, navigational, or bureaucratic trivia. The introduction is a hefty (considering the slimness of what follows) 30 pages long. It's full of pompous structuralist lingo and political correctness. Cartier was a real S.O.B., alright, ruthlessly kidnapping Indians and taking them back to France, but readers can probably figure that out for themselves. The best thing about this for me was the description of watching Indians smoke tobacco for the first time. Boggles the mind when you think of all the zillions of cigarettes smoked since then. Not for the general reader.

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