

Historical and Descriptive

Isles, regions and provinces of the heathen and infidels," is generally accorded the distinction of first viewing this Island—June 24th, 1497—and naming it Saint John in honor of the day—Saint John's Day. Some authorities maintain that Cabot's son Sebastian discovered it in 1498; while others contend that it was Champlain who in 1603, named the Island "Isle St. Jean" and planted upon its ruddy soil the *Fleur-de-lis*. Unfortunately, no details of the earliest voyages have been preserved.

In 1534, Jacques Cartier, the intrepid mariner of St. Malo, made his initial voyage to the new world. He sighted Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland, touched at various points on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and first trod Canadian soil at Brest, on the coast of Quebec. Thence he called at the Magdalen Islands, and afterwards reached St. John's shore. That this Island was beautiful even before it received the charm which cultivation has since imparted, is evident from the quaint descriptions of the land as Cartier saw it, from one of which—the "Relation Originale"—we quote as follows:

"All this land is low and the most beautiful it is possible to see, and full of beautiful trees and meadows; but in it we were not able to find a harbor, because it is a low land, very shallow and all ranged with sands. We went ashore in several places in our boats, and among others into a beautiful but very shallow river, where we saw boats of savages, which were crossing this river, which on this account, we named the River of Boats.

That day we coasted along the said land nine or ten leagues, trying to find some harbor, which we could not; for as I have said before, it is a land low and shallow. We went ashore in four places to see the trees, which are of the very finest and sweet smelling, and found that there were cedars, pines, white elms, ashes, willows and many others to us unknown. The lands where there are no woods are very beautiful, and all full of peason, white and red gooseberries, strawberries, blackberries, and wild grain like rye; it seems there to have been sown and ploughed. This is a land of the best temperature which it is possible to see, and of great heat, and there are many doves and thrushes and other birds; it only wants harbors."