

# Module 3 Lesson 3

## Lesson 3

**Jean François de La Roque de Roberval**

**1500-1560**



Par Jean Clouet — <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~louislarcocque/roberval.jpg>, Domaine public, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1020219>



He was a nobleman, war hero, a childhood friend of Francis 1, pirate, privateer, colonizer.

Privateers operating out of St. Malo, forced English ships to pay a kind of 'tribute' to them. They also plundered the wealth of Spanish ships and other ships bringing spices from the East.

His arena of privateering was the area called the **Spanish Main** - from Cuba to Columbia.



De Roberval's inherited substantial wealth from his father's marriages and from relatives who died childless.

There was also a family tradition of successive generations working under the orders of the **Marshall of France**.

The marshall commanded the king's armies. De Roberval followed in the footsteps of his forebears from teenage years.



He served under the supervision of **Robert de La Marck-Fleurange** who was the Marshal of France for Francis' army.

Because his garrison was stationed close to his home, he spent most of his time there, even though he sometimes travelled away from home.



It is said that after the war of **1525-26**, when Francis was released from captivity, he went hunting with de Roberval on the de Roberval's estates.

In **1535**, Jean-François de La Roque de Roberval became a Huguenot and was wanted for hanging. Francis 1 protected him in his palace.



As a young nobleman, he joined the French Army, participating in many of the **Italian Wars between the years of 1524 and 1544.**

He became a member of the Marshal's general staff under **La Marck**. He was present in Pavia when Francis was captured in **1525.**



**In 1536**, he also participated in a siege against a Spanish force on its way to Paris.

Even though he was recognized as a hero in that war, he had witnessed the death of La Marck and many of his colleagues at the hands of the Spanish in that battle.

He was traumatised by it.



He was engaged, with La Marck's son, in rebuilding his regiment when **King Francis ordered Cartier back to Canada to establish a settlement.**

Cartier expected to be Captain General of Canada. He was commissioned to settle Canada for the Holy Catholic Church.



However, in **January 1541**, **de Roberval** was named **Captain General** and leader of the expedition, while **Cartier** was named as **Chief Navigator, Cartographer and Explorer**.



Francis 1 provided three ships and some funds. The three ships were: The Valentine, The Anne, The Lechefraye.

De Roberval's skills as a fearless military leader, fortifications engineer and mining supervisor, made him a suitable candidate to lead the expedition.

Because Francis expanded the scope of the expedition to Canada, De Roberval was given permission to recruit the necessary manpower.



The composition of the first attempted colony included noblemen, craftsmen, soldiers, and even criminals as cheap labour for building.

For the protection of the colony, De Roberval was expecting military equipment from his garrison as part of his preparation for the voyage.

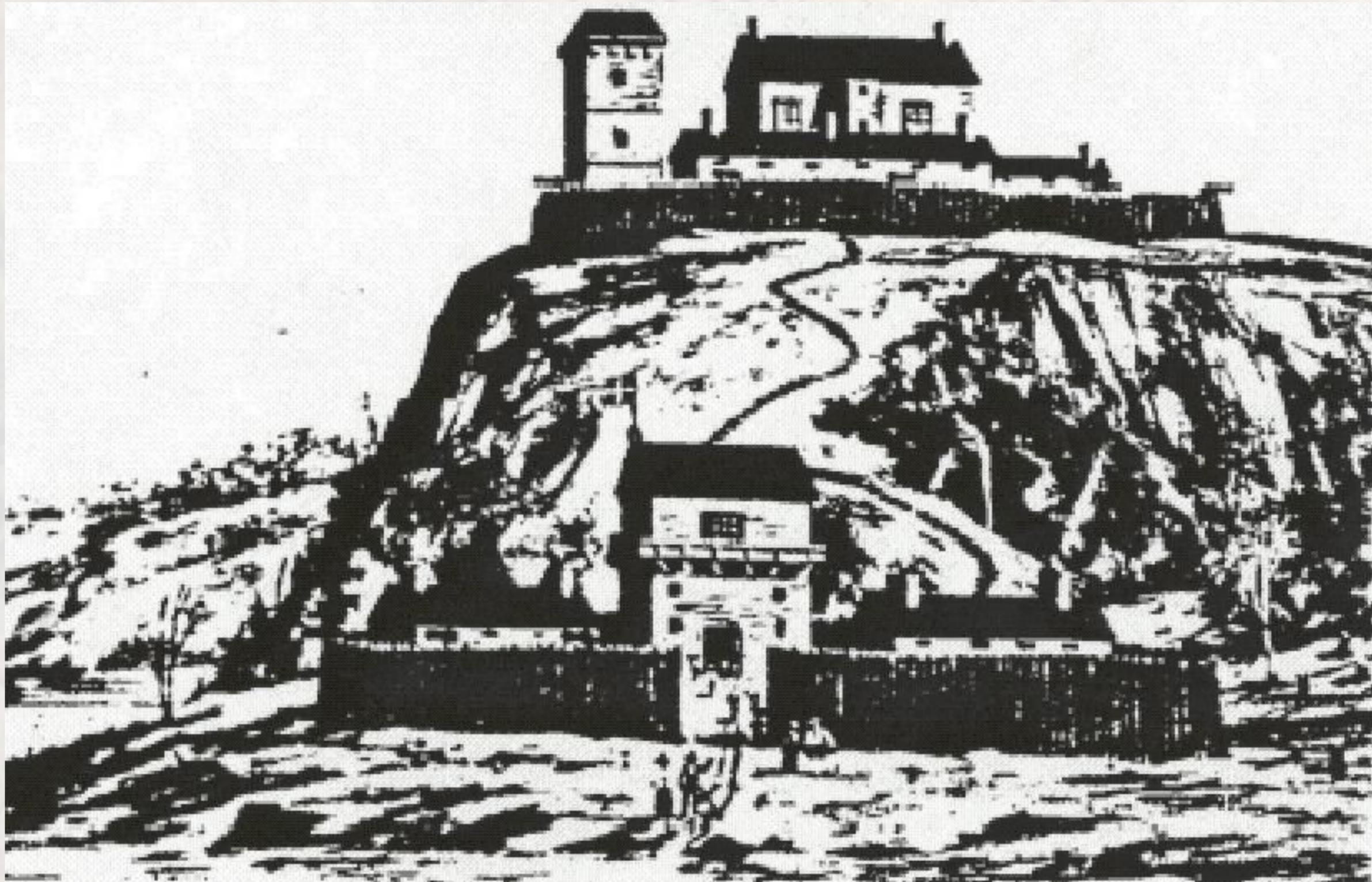
It did not arrive on time, and because De Roberval's trip was delayed he sent Cartier ahead in **May of 1541 with 200 colonists** to begin settling the colony before he arrived.



Jacques Cartier sailed from La Rochelle

Cartier built a fortified colony '**Charlesbourg Royal**' at **Cap Rouge** near the Iroquois village of Stadacona (Quebec City).

The site of the fort was made a National Historic Site when Jean Charest was Premier of Quebec. ([Charlesbourg-Royal](#))



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Cartier left in the fort to go back to France in **1542**, before De Roberval could arrive at the fort.

**What Cartier did not know** was that in **1541** while his ships were at sea, it seemed like war was on the horizon again. 2 French ambassadors were assassinated in Italy by the Spanish.



De Roberval wanted to be available for King Francis.

The war was averted but by then, it was too late to sail for Canada. He spent the winter orchestrating a trade blockade of Spanish ships around Brittany.

**On April 16 1542**, De Roberval set out from La Rochelle with three ships piloted by **Jean Fontenaue**, to go to Canada.

He was unaware that Spanish ships were hunting for him and his ships in the Atlantic.



Nevertheless, he arrived at Newfoundland on **June 8th**, just as Cartier was on his way back to France. They met off the coast of Newfoundland where Cartier shared maps and charts with De Roberval.

Cartier was ordered back to the colony by De Roberval, but because he was impatient to show his 'gold & diamonds' to the king, he stole away in the night.

He took with him the military detachment he had been given and some very unhappy colonists.



De Roberval inhabited the Charlesbourg Royal (named after Francis I's son, Charles IX) and also inherited the fallout from Cartier's conflict with the Natives.

He developed better relations with the Natives who helped them with supplies in the winter. About 50 colonists still died of scurvy.

In the Spring of **1543** he took a group of 70 colonists exploring the Saguenay region in search of the city of gold. He lost 8 people when one of the boats capsized.



Francis had sent fresh supplies to them with a letter demanding their return to France because war had again broken out and he needed De Roberval.

In the fall of **1544** de Roberval was assigned to rebuilding the fortifications north of Paris. he recruited men from the area plus many of the colonisers who had returned with him from Canada.



Because he was a member of the general staff, he was engaged in all the other conflicts until the peace treaty of **1558**.

**King Henry II** had appointed him as the Royal Superintendent of Mines.

He died just before the outbreak of the French wars of Religion while leaving a Calvinist meeting in **1560**.

His sisters inherited his family's holdings.