

# RENÉ-ROBERT CAVELIER, SIEUR DE LA SALLE

René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle was a French explorer during the mid-seventeenth century. He belonged to the Jesuit order, taking his vows in 1660.

However, he lost his vocation and turned his interests instead to trade and exploration. He travelled to New France, arriving there in 1667. His goal was to find the

Pacific Ocean through the Ohio River. He and his party of religious officials, who had an interest in converting the indigenous populations of the area, relied heavily upon Aboriginal tribes in order to navigate the unknown territory of the Great Lakes region. He was influential in establishing Fort Frontenac, located in what is now Kingston, Ontario. René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle also helped to develop the French fur trade in North America. He strengthened industry in the Great Lakes region through a shipbuilding operation near the Niagara River. This shipyard produced the Griffon. LaSalle used this ship to venture through the Great Lakes, particularly Lake Michigan. During this venture, he created Fort Miami on the Miami River. He later travelled to the Mississippi River Delta in order to claim the lands of Louisiana for King Louis XIV of France and extend French lands to the borders of New Spain. His trip was fraught with disease and starvation. Many of his crew members deserted him, and one of his ships was destroyed. He landed in Matagorda Bay (present-day Texas) and died in 1687 when the remaining members of his crew revolted and murdered him.

