

Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512)

AMERIGO VESPUCCI (or VESPUCIO) (ves-puteh'-ee), Italian navigator, born in Florence, Italy, 9 March, 1451; died in Seville, Spain, 22 Feb., 1512. He was of a wealthy family of merchants, and received his education from his uncle, Giorgi Antonio Vespucci, a Dominican friar, a friend and colleague of Savonarola. He engaged in business, first in Florence and afterward in Seville, where he met Columbus, perhaps as early as 1493, and where in 1497 he equipped the fleet with which that navigator sailed on his third voyage. He had previously, in 1496, had charge of fitting out a fleet for the Spanish government.

Amerigo sailed from Spain in 1499 in an expedition that visited the neighborhood of Cape Paria and several hundred miles of coast, and returned in June, 1500. In May, 1501, he entered the service of Emanuel, of Portugal, and participated in an expedition that visited the coast of Brazil. In May, 1503, he commanded a caravel in a squadron that sailed for the discovery of Malacca, but parted company from the rest, and finally made his way to the coast of Brazil, where he discovered the bay of All Saints, remained there two months, then ran 260 leagues farther south, where he built a fort, somewhere near Cape Frio, and, leaving a colony there, returned to Lisbon in June, 1504.

Early in 1505 he obtained from King Ferdinand of Spain letters of naturalization, and on 22 March, 1508, was appointed pilot-major of the kingdom, an office that he held until his death, taking charge of the preparation of a general description of coasts and accounts of new discoveries, and also superintending the construction of charts and the examination of pilots. The controversy as to whether Vespucci took precedence both of the (Jabots and of Columbus in the discovery of the mainland of America has been for centuries a matter of dispute. None of the original letters of Amerigo bearing on the subject are extant, except in translations, and these differ greatly among themselves and contain inconsistencies of fact and date. It is not even known in what language the letters were written.

An account by Amerigo of his voyage of 1499, said to have been written 18 July, 1500, was published by Bandini in 1745. A letter of his to Lorenzo Piero de Medici, a cousin of Lorenzo the Magnificent, describing the voyage of 1501, was published in various editions, some in Latin, others in German, and in 1789 a new text, in Italian, was discovered by Bartolozzi. The Strasburg edition of 1505 bears the title "*De Ora Antarctica*." In 1507 a "*Cosmographiae Introductio*" was published at the little college of St. Dig in Lorraine, and to it was appended an account by Amerigo of his voyages, purporting to be addressed to Rene II., duke of Lorraine, there it is asserted that four voyages were made, the date of the first being fixed at May, 1497. Amerigo would thus have reached the mainland a week or two earlier than Cabot, and about 14 months earlier than Columbus. It was also suggested in this book that Amerigo should give his name to the continent he had discovered.

The best authorities now consider the evidence incontrovertible that this date of 1497 is incorrect, and doubt has thus been thrown upon the rest of Amerigo's narrative. He has been charged by many with deliberate falsification, and most of his apologists have contented themselves with defending his character, rather than the truth of his narrative, ascribing the inconsistencies of the latter to the errors of translators and copyists.

Santarem, in his "Researches," says he could find no mention at all of Vespucci in the royal archives of Portugal, nor in the diplomatic records, where all new discoveries were mentioned, and the fact that his reputed discovery of the mainland was not used as evidence by the Spanish government in an action at law in 1512, where it would have been in their favor, seems to show that it was not given credence at that day. The name of America, however, suggested by the "*Cosmographiae Introductio*," began soon to be generally used, and it was not until the publication of Schoner's "*Opusculum Geographicum*" (1533) that doubt began to be thrown on its propriety. See "*Life and Voyages of Americus Vespucius*," by C. E. Lester (New York, 1846); Santarem's "*Vespucius and his Voyages*," translated by E. V. Childe (Boston, 1850); and Winsor's "*Narrative and Critical History of America*" (Boston, 1884). -- *Edited Appleton's American Biography Copyright* © 2000 by Virtualology™

Bartolomeu Dias

A famous [Portuguese](#) navigator of the fifteenth century, discoverer of the Cape of Good Hope; died at sea, 29 May, 1500.

Several [Portuguese](#) historians state that he was a relative or descendant of João Dias who sailed around Cape Bojador in 1434, and of Diniz Dias who is said to have discovered the Cape Verde Islands. As early as 1481 Bartolomeu Dias had accompanied Diogo d'Azambuja on an expedition to the Gold Coast.

Dias was a cavalier of the royal court, superintendent of the royal warehouses and sailing-master of the man-of-war "San Christovao", when King John (João) II appointed him on 10 October, 1486, as the head of an expedition which was to endeavor to sail around the southern end of [Africa](#). Its chief purpose was to find the country of the [Christian African](#) king known as [Prester John](#), concerning whom recent reports had arrived (1486) through João Alfonso d'Aveiro, and with whom the [Portuguese](#) wished to enter into friendly relations.

After ten months of preparation Dias left [Lisbon](#) the latter part of July or the beginning of August, 1487, with two armed caravels of fifty tons each and one supply-ship. Among his companions were Pero d'Alemquer, who wrote a description of [Vasco da Gama's](#) first voyage, Leitao, João Infante, Alvaro Martins, and João Grego. The supply-ship was commanded by Bartolomeu's brother, Pero Dias.

Dias sailed first towards the mouth of the Congo, discovered the year before by Cao and [Behaim](#), then following the [African](#) coast, he entered Walfisch Bay, and probably erected the first of his stone columns near the present Angra Pequena. From 29° south latitude (Port Nolloth) he lost sight of the coast and was driven by a violent storm, which lasted thirteen days, far beyond the cape to the south. When calm weather returned he sailed again in an easterly direction and, when no land appeared, turned northward, landing in the Bahia dos Vaqueiros (Mossel Bay). Following the coast he reached Algoa Bay, and then the limit of his exploration, the Great Fish River, which he named after the commander of the accompanying vessel, Rio Infante. It was only on his return voyage that he discovered the Cape, to which, according to Barros, he gave the name of Cabo Tormentoso. King John, in view of the success of the expedition, is said to have proposed the name it has since borne, Cape of Good Hope. In December, 1488, Dias returned to [Lisbon](#) after an absence of sixteen months and seventeen days. He had shown the way to [Vasco da Gama](#) whom in 1497 he accompanied, but in a subordinate position, as far as the Cape Verde Islands.

In 1500 Dias commanded a ship in the expedition of [Cabral](#); his vessel, however, was one of those wrecked not far from the Cape of Good Hope, which he had discovered thirteen years before. An official report of the expedition to the cape has not yet been found. Besides the account by [Barros](#) there is a note written on the margin of page 13 of a manuscript copy of [Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly's](#) "Imago Mundi", which is of importance, as this copy was once the property of [Christopher Columbus](#). Ravenstein has attempted, and not unsuccessfully, by the aid of contemporary charts to reconstruct the entire voyage with the different stopping-points of the route.

Researched at: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04775b.htm>

CABEZA DE VACA, ÁLVAR NÚÑEZ

(ca. 1490-ca. 1556).

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, an early Spanish explorer, was born about 1490 in Jerez de la Frontera, an Andalusian town near Cádiz, to Francisco de Vera and Teresa Cabeza de Vaca. Cabeza de Vaca was his preferred surname. It descended from an ancestor who had helped secure victory for Christian forces at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) by marking an unguarded pass in the Sierra Moreno with the skull of a cow. In gratitude, King Sancho of Navarra bestowed the surname "Cow's Head" on Cabeza de Vaca's matrilineal progenitors. The Álvar Núñez portion of Cabeza de Vaca's name also came from a prominent ancestor of his mother, who was an accomplished naval officer.

As a young man Cabeza de Vaca gained military experience in Italy, where he campaigned with the Spanish army of Charles V. His service to the crown probably earned him the position of treasurer in the 1527-28 expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez.^{qv} Narváez, a minor participant in the conquest of Mexico, had lost an eye and command of his army to Hernán Cortés in 1520. Later, his importunities at the Spanish court resulted in a royal patent to found a colony in Florida, a name applied to the Gulf Coast between the province of Pánuco in Mexico and the Florida peninsula.

Narváez departed from Spain in June 1527, wintered in Cuba, and landed on the west coast of Florida in April 1528. Despite protests from Cabeza de Vaca, Narváez decided to separate 300 men from his support vessels and reconnoiter the land. He was soon permanently separated from his ships and stranded on the Florida coast, which he believed to be only a few leagues from the Pánuco River.

Narváez's expedition then began a march up the interior coast to northwestern Florida, where it remained for approximately three months. Faced with hostile natives and food shortages, Narváez elected to build improvised barges and to leave Florida by sea. His command, which had dwindled to fewer than 250 men, crowded into five craft and set out for Pánuco. The first month at sea went well. Hugging the coast, the small flotilla approached the mouth of the Mississippi River. But on the thirty-first day a storm caught the barges and eventually drove them apart. Several days after passing the mouth of the Great River, two of the battered craft were beached on an island (probably San Luis, now known as Follets Island^{qv}) off the Texas coast, in November 1528. Among some eighty survivors were Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, his African-born slave Estevanico, and Alonso Castillo Maldonado.^{qv} These men, known as the "four ragged castaways," were among the first non-Indians to set foot on Texas soil, and they were the only survivors of the Narváez expedition. Most of the others succumbed to disease, injuries, drowning, or violence at the hands of hostile coastal tribes.

Shortly after landing on the Texas coast, Cabeza de Vaca became separated from the other survivors. Believing he had died on the mainland, all but two of them proceeded down the coast. Cabeza de Vaca recovered from a near fatal illness and later became the first European merchant in Texas. He ranged inland as well as along the coast, carrying sea shells and mesquite beans to the interior and returning with skins and red ochre. He also enjoyed success as a medicine man; his treatment consisted of blessing the afflicted, breathing on injuries, and praying.

Cabeza de Vaca's reluctance to leave the Galveston area was influenced by a single surviving countryman, Lope de Oviedo, who refused to leave the initial landfall island. In 1532 Cabeza de Vaca convinced the reluctant Spaniard to accompany him along the coast toward Pánuco, as the other survivors had done in the spring of 1529. En route Lope de Oviedo turned back and disappeared from history. Cabeza de Vaca eventually rendezvoused with three astonished colleagues at what they called the "river of nuts," probably the Guadalupe. There the four castaways, who were made slaves of the Mariame Indians, plotted their escape to Mexico. Not until 1534, however, did they start for Pánuco.

Cabeza de Vaca and the other castaways traveled from the environs of Galveston Island to Culiacán, an outpost near the Pacific Coast of Mexico, where they arrived in early 1536. Their path has been the subject of historical controversy for more than a century. Differences over route interpretations continue, for no one can prove with absolute certainty the precise course followed on any part of the journey. It is the Texas portion of the odyssey, however, that has received the most attention.

The *Relación* of Cabeza de Vaca reported the experience, and the joint report, a cooperative account, was written by the three surviving Spaniards. Both accounts were composed shortly after the trek ended in 1536. Biotic, ethnographic, and physiographic information contained in these narratives provides clues as to where the four men spent nearly seven years in Texas and what they saw. Their reports of their experiences provide valuable data on Texas Indians, landforms, flora, and fauna.

The crucial pieces of evidence in the narratives are the dimensions of the island where the initial landing occurred, the distance between and the crossing of four successive streams on the mainland, the description of a series of inlets along the coast toward Pánuco, the mention of a "river of nuts" and extensive stands of prickly pear cactus, the crossing of a large river comparable in width to the Guadalquivir River in Spain, the subsequent appearance of mountains near the coast that ran from the direction of the "North Sea," and the recorded names of Indian tribes. The data, when correlated with the established goal of reaching Pánuco, strongly suggest a southern route along the inner Texas coast and a crossing of the lower Río Grande into Mexico near the site of International Falcon Reservoir.⁴⁹ Ultimately, the castaways' successful flight on foot brought them back to Texas at the junction of the Rio Grande and the Río Conchos near the site of present Presidio, Texas. On that portion of the trek, Cabeza de Vaca removed an arrow from the chest of an Indian. The operation has earned him remembrance as the "patron saint" of the Texas Surgical Society. Cabeza de Vaca also deserves recognition as the first geographer, historian, and ethnologist in Texas. He was the only Spaniard to live among the coastal Indians of Texas and survive to write about them. As a result he, along with Dorantes de Carranza and Castillo Maldonado, may be remembered for producing the first Texas literature.

In the early 1540s Cabeza de Vaca again served the Spanish crown as a governor in what is now Paraguay. He was, however, charged with misrule there, recalled to Spain, tried, and temporarily banished to North Africa. Later he was cleared of charges and permitted to return to Spain, where he died in the mid-1550s.

Researched at: <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/CC/fca6.html>

Christopher Columbus

1451-1506

COLUMBUS, Christopher, discoverer, born in Genoa about 1436; died in Valladolid, 20 May, 1506. It is a singular circumstance that we do not know with certainty where or when Columbus was born. His descendant, the Duke de Veragua, believes, with the best authorities, that he was a native of Genoa, and that his birth occurred about the year 1436-possibly as late as 1440. According to the custom of the time, he Latinized his name of Cristoforo Colombo into Columbus, and when he went to Spain adopted the Spanish form of it, Cristobal Colon. He was the eldest son of Domenico Colombo, a wool-comber, and his wife, Susanna Fontanarossa. They had two other sons, Bartolomeo and Giacomo, the latter called in Spain Diego.

The early history of Columbus is involved in obscurity. His son and biographer, Ferdinand, unwilling from mistaken pride to reveal the humble condition from which his father emerged, has left his biography very incomplete. We know that for a time he attended school and assisted his father in the trade of wool-combing before going to sea at the age of fifteen, also that he saw some sea-fighting in the wars between Genoa and Venice. These unknown years, it would appear, were stormy, laborious, and eventful "Wherever ship has sailed," Columbus writes, "there have I journeyed." We know that he was for a time engaged in selling books in Genoa, and that at a later date he was wrecked in an engagement begun off Cape St. Vincent, and, before his ship sank, escaped on a plank and reached the shores of Portugal. This was about 1470. He made his way to Lisbon, where he supported himself by making maps and charts and by occasional voyages. A few years later he met and married Donna Felipa, daughter of an Italian named Parestrello, who had been governor of Porto Santo. Columbus resided for some time on this island, where his wife -- would that we knew something of her -- had inherited a small property, and where their son Diego was born. Here he studied the papers and maps left by his father-in-law, a distinguished navigator under Prince Henry, of Portugal, and here he was constantly brought into association with persons interested in maritime discovery.

The Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria

The precise date when Columbus conceived the design of discovering, not a new continent, but a western route to Asia, cannot be determined -- probably about 1474. During the ensuing ten years he made proposals of discovery to Genoa, Portugal, Venice, France, and England, which were deemed by some of those governments the extravagant demands of a mere adventurer. The king of Portugal, after having referred the project to a maritime junta and to his council, both of whom regarded it as visionary, nevertheless sent a caravel, under the pretext of taking provisions to the Cape de Verde islands, but with secret instructions to try the route proposed by Columbus. After sailing several days, the pilots, losing courage, returned with the report that no indications of land had been seen. King John was not yet inclined to give up the scheme, although it had been most unmercifully ridiculed by his council and other unbelievers. But Columbus, who had lost his wife and property, as well as all hope of aid in that quarter, determined to abandon Portugal and seek elsewhere for patronage.

Accordingly he left Lisbon toward the end of 1484 secretly, lest his departure should be prevented, and set out for Spain. Meeting with Marchena, the Superior of La Rabida, an Andalusian monastery, now preserved by the government of Spain as a national monument, that good man became so deeply interested in his glorious project that he detained him as a guest, and sent for the learned physician of Palos, Garcia Fernandez, to discuss the scheme. Now it was for the first time listened to with admiration. Marchena, assuming charge of the maintenance and education of the young son of Columbus, gave the father a letter of introduction to the confessor of Isabella, Fernando de Talavera. After seven years of weary attendance on the Spanish court, Columbus was on the point of departure for France when stipulations were at last signed by Ferdinand and Isabella at the camp of Santa Fe, on 17 April, 1492. On Friday, 3 Aug., Columbus, as admiral of the seas and lands which he expected to discover, set sail from the bar of Saltes, near Palos, with 120 men in three small ships, as seen in the illustration--the "Santa Maria," a decked vessel of ninety feet keel, and two caravels or undecked boats, the "Pinta" and "Ni-

no," much smaller than the "Santa Maria."

On Friday, 12 Oct., 1492, the outposts of the New World were seen. One of the Bahama group is the land first discovered, but as to which particular island there is great difference of opinion. Humboldt thinks it was Cat island, called by the natives Guanahavi and by the Spaniards San Salvador. Some writers have claimed that it was on that beautiful spot where Columbus wished to be buried and where he slept for centuries--the island of Santo Domingo. According to the latest investigations, Columbus certainly landed on Cat, So-mann, or Watlings islands. These investigations, pursued chiefly in the explorer's log-book, would seem to indicate that the admiral's landing-place was the last-mentioned island, now (1886) believed to be the true San Salvador. This is perhaps as near as the world will ever come to a certain knowledge of the "landfall" of Columbus on the American continent. In the spring of the following year news of the startling event burst upon the astonished ears of Europe. Columbus returned to Europe, landing triumphantly at Palos on Friday, 15 March, 1493. and in his journey through Spain to Barcelona he received princely honors all the way. There his entrance with some of the natives, and with the arms and utensils of the discovered islands, was a long-delayed triumph, as striking and more glorious than that of a Roman conqueror

With seventeen ships and 1,700 men Columbus sailed on his second voyage from Cadiz, 25 Sept., 1493, discovered the Windward islands, Jamaica, and Porto Rico, and founded a colony in Hispaniola, of which he left his brother Bartholomew lieutenant-governor, reaching Cadiz 11 June, 1496. He succeeded in clearing himself of the charges preferred against him by the adventurers who had accompanied him, and on 30 May, 1498, sailed with six ships on his third voyage. Columbus discovered the Orinoco and then visited Hispaniola, only to again become the victim of malice and misrepresentation. A commissioner sent by the Spanish king to inquire into the charges placed him and his brother in chains and sent them to Spain. When the captain of the ship offered to free him from his fetters, Columbus proudly replied: "No, I will wear them as a memento of the gratitude of princes." The indignation expressed throughout Spain at this outrage caused the king to disclaim having authorized it" but the nobles were jealous of his superior rank, and Ferdinand dissatisfied with the small profits received from the expedition to the New World. The only subsequent employment Columbus received was the command of four caravels to search through the sea, now the gulf, of Mexico. He sailed from Cadiz, 9 May, 1502, coasted along the south side of the gulf, and, after much suffering from hardship and famine, reached San Lucar, 7 Nov., 1504, where he lay sick for several months, and, on his recovery and return to Spain, had his claim finally rejected by the king. At length, infirm in body, but in full possession of his faculties, having, in his own words, "no place to repair to but an inn, and often with nothing to pay for his sustenance," the discoverer of a new world died at No. 2 Calle Ancha de la Magdalena on Ascension day, in a small apartment of a modest house, with a few faithful friends and followers standing by his bedside. A small tablet on the front of the two-story stone building, some 600 years old, briefly states, "Here died Columbus."

The travels of the discoverer did not cease with his death. His remains, after burial at Valladolid, were removed to Seville. In 1536 they were taken with great pomp to Santo Domingo and interred in the cathedral. In 1796 what were supposed to be his ashes were again removed to the cathedral of Havana and buried there with imposing ceremonials; but it is believed by many authorities that the remains conveyed to Cuba were not those of Columbus, but those of his son Diego. On this point, and in answer to the recent assertion that he was a native of Calvi, in Corsica, the Duke of Vera-gun says in a letter to the writer: "I do not think any of the historians or writers have been successful in their attempts to deprive Genoa of the honor of being the birthplace of Columbus or in taking from Havana the glory of possessing his ashes."

The name and fame of Columbus are not local or limited ; they do not belong to any single country or people. They are the proud possession of the whole civilized world. In all the transactions of history there is no act which for vastness and performance can be compared to the discovery of the continent of America, "the like of which was never done by any man in ancient or in later times." After forming his great and glorious designs, Columbus still continued, even during his most destitute days, the promiser of kingdoms, holding firmly in his grasp "the keys of the ocean sea," claiming as it were from heaven the Indies as his own, and "dividing them as he pleased." He never knew the extent or value of his discovery. He died in the conviction that the land he had

reached was the long-sought Indies. But it was a country far richer than the Indies; and had he, in quitting Cuba, struck into a westerly instead of a southerly direction, it would have carried him into the very depths of the golden regions whose existence he had so long and so vainly predicted. As it was, he "only opened the gates," to use his own language, for others more fortunate than himself ; and before he left Hispaniola for the last time the young adventurer arrived there who was destined, by the conquest of Mexico, to realize all the magnificent visions, which had been derided only as visions, in the lifetime of Columbus.

The [accompanying illustration](#) is a representation of a noble statue by Sunal, a Spanish sculptor, which will be set up in the Central park on the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of our continent, an event which it is believed will be celebrated by the governments of Spain and the United States, other European and American nations perhaps participating in the quadri-centennial of the momentous event. The late king of Spain, who said to the writer, "Columbus should form an enduring bond between Spain and the United States," was deeply interested in the proposed celebration, expecting to visit the New World with a large Spanish fleet, and perhaps to witness the unveiling of the Columbus statue in the Central park.

The following remarkable letter, not to be found in any of the biographies of Columbus, was written in Spanish by the great admiral two days before he sailed from Saltes in search of "that famous land." It was addressed to Agostino Barberigo, doge of Venice, to whom the discoverer had previously made proposals of exploration, and has lain perdu for three hundred and ninety-two years among the fifteen millions of Venetian archives contained in an ancient monastery near the grand canal. There is a surprising tone of confidence about the letter, and the reference to "the famous land" is certainly remarkable :

" MAGNIFICENT SIR: Since your republic has not deemed it convenient to accept my offers, and all the spite of my many enemies has been brought in force to oppose my petition, I have thrown myself in the arms of God, my Maker, and He, by the intercession of the saints, has caused the most clement king of Castile not to refuse to generously assist my project toward the discovery of a new world. And praising thereby the good God, I obtained the placing under my command of men and ships, and am about to start on a voyage to that famous land, grace to which intent God has been pleased to bestow upon me;" Like Shakespeare, the Inventor de las Indias has suffered a series of feeble and foolish attacks from those who would fain rob him of the glory of being the most successful of all navigators, as they would deprive "the myriad-minded" of the authorship of his own writings. The latest of these futile efforts to prove him to be an "inglorious Columbus," was made in an address before the New York Historical Society, on the evening of 2 Nov., 1886 -- Fernando, son of Christopher Columbus and Beatriz Enriquez, his second wife, born in Spain in 1488; died in 1539.

His father legitimated him by a codicil dated at Segovia, 25 Aug., 1505. At the age of ten he was a page of Queen Isabella, and then began his studies, becoming proficient in mathematics, cosmography, and naval subjects. In 1508-'9 he made a voyage to Hispaniola with his eldest brother, Admiral Diego Columbus, and afterward he accompanied Charles V. to Italy and Germany, travelled in Africa and Asia, and retired in 1530, when he became a priest. He collected a fine library of 20,000 volumes, which he bequeathed to the cathedral of Seville. A large number of the most valuable of these were found in October, 1886, mouldering in a cellar of Seville. He wrote "His-toria del Almirante Don Cristobal Colon," which would have been lost but for a translation into Italian made by Alonso de Ulloa (Venice, 1571), and left another manuscript, "Apuntamientos sobre la Demarcacion del Maluco y sus Islas," kept in the archives of Simancas. See "Select Letters relating to the Four Voyages to the New World of Columbus," translated and edited by R. H. Major (London, Hakluyt society, 1847); "Life and Voyages of Columbus," by Washington Irving (New York, 1828); "The Spanish Conquest of America," by Sir Arthur Helps (London, 1858-'60); "Notes on Columbus," by Henri Harrisse (printed privately, New York, 1865); "Memorials and Footprints of Columbus," by Jas. Grant Wilson (New York, American geographical society, 1885). *Edited Appleton's American Biography Copyright© 2000 by Virtualology™*

Ferdinand Magellan

Ferdinand Magellan was the leader of the first expedition to circumnavigate the real world. He was the first European to sail across the Pacific Ocean and discovered a route by which ships could sail a complete circle around the world. The Straits of Magellan, located at the Southern tip of South America are named for him. This strait proved to be the connection between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

Magellan was born the son of Pedro Ruy de Magalhaes and Alda de Mezquita in Sabrosa, Portugal in 1480. In Portuguese his name was Fernao de Magalhaes. Of noble parentage, he became a page at the Portuguese court where he learned astronomy and nautical science. At a young age he was preoccupied by voyages of discovery. In 1505, sailing with Francisco d'Almeida, Magellan took part in an expedition to India for the purpose of establishing Portuguese royalty in India. By the year 1510 he had been promoted to the rank of captain. In 1511, he took part in the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, gaining control of the Strait of Malacca. Although it is not absolutely documented, Magellan may have been part of the voyage that reached the Spice Islands in 1511. Returning home in 1512, he took part in the Portuguese expedition to Marocco and was severely wounded, leaving him lame for life. Feeling he was not sufficiently rewarded for his services, Magellan left the army without permission, leading to his disgrace with the king. He gave up his nationality and offered his services to King Charles I (later Holy Roman Emperor Charles V), ruler of Spain in 1517.

Portugal had claimed as theirs the islands of the Far East as a result of the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494. Magellan claimed that many of them, including the rich Spice Islands, actually lay in Spain's territory, that Portuguese maps had been falsified to conceal this fact. In 1513, Vasco de Balboa had found an ocean on the far side of the New World discovered by Christopher Columbus. Magellan proposed to the Spanish king an expedition to find a passage through the New World to this ocean and to sail west to the Moluccas, thus proving that the Spice Islands lay on the Spanish side of the line of demarcation. King Charles approved the plan. Magellan took the oath of allegiance in the church of Santa Maria de la Victoria de Triana in Seville, and received the imperial standard. He also gave a large sum of money to the monks of the monastery in order that they might pray for the success of the expedition. After a year of preparations the expedition left Seville in September of 1519 in five small vessels.

Sailing across the Atlantic Ocean he reached South America at the Bay of Rio de Janeiro by December 13th. They arrived at the estuary of the Rio de la Plata by January 10, 1520 and probed for the passage to the vast western ocean. By March 31st, Magellan decided to spend the next six months there during winter storms. During this time, one ship, The Santiago, was wrecked, a mutiny occurred and was quelled, and another ship was lost to desertion headed back to Spain. The voyage was resumed on August 24, 1520. By October he had sighted what he assumed to be the sought after strait. Ships went ahead and reported what they thought to be an ocean beyond. However, this only proved to be another large bay. After deliberating with his navigators, Magellan decided to proceed. Magellan had just sailed through the strait that would later bear his name, the Strait of Magellan. Those straits were originally called the Canal de Todos los Santos (All Saints' Channel) by Magellan himself. By late November (November 28) Magellan and the three remaining ships finally reached the ocean which seven years earlier, Balboa had discovered. Because of its apparent calmness, he named it Mar Pacifico, the Pacific Ocean.

The voyage proceeded along the coast of South America and on December 18th headed west into the Pacific. One month into the voyage, hardships were encountered. Supplies were depleting, food and drinking water were scarce. Many of the crew died of scurvy. Land was sighted but no landfall was made until Magellan reached the Marianas (or Ladrones) Islands by March of 1521. There he took on more provisions. Landing on the island of Cebu on April 7th, he was received in a friendly manner by the chief and ruler of the island. After eight days, Magellan was able to convert the ruler to Christianity along with hundreds of natives. The ruler agreed to aid him in an attack on the natives of neighboring island, Mactan. There, involved in fighting with natives, Magellan was killed on April 27, 1521.

The two remaining ships were refitted and spices purchased. Under Juan Sebastian del Cano they set sail for the return voyage to Spain. Only one ship, the Victoria, with a crew of only eighteen men and 4 East Indians reached Seville, Spain on September 8, 1522 after a voyage across the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope and north through the Atlantic. Completing a voyage of more than three years, they had succeeded in circumnavigating the globe. The spices they brought them amply repaid the expenses of the voyage.

Magellan himself had not succeeded in his principal purpose, to circumnavigate the globe in one voyage. He had, however, provided the skill and determination that made this achievement possible.

There is no greater name than Ferdinand Magellan in the history of discovery. He succeeded in crossing the Pacific from east to west. His voyage laid the foundation for trade in the Pacific between the New World and the East.

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Francisco Pizarro

Born in Trujillo, Estremadura, [Spain](#), probably in 1471; died at [Lima, Peru](#), 26 June, 1541.

He was the **illegitimate** son of Gonzalo Pizarro and Francisca González, who paid little attention to his education and he grew up without learning how to read or write. His father was a captain of infantry and had fought in the Neopolitan wars with el Gran Capitán Gonzalo de Córdoba. Filled with enthusiasm at the accounts of the exploits of his countrymen in America, Pizarro set sail (10 November, 1509) with [Alonso de Ojeda](#) from Spain, on the latter's expedition to Urabí, where [Ojeda](#) founded the city of San Sebastian, and left it in Pizarro's care when he returned to the ship for provisions. Hardships and the climate having thinned the ranks of his companions, Pizarro sailed to the port of Cartagena. There he joined the fleet of Martín Fernández de Enciso, and later attached himself to the expedition of [Nuñez de Balboa](#), whom he accompanied on his journey across the Isthmus of Panama to discover the Pacific Ocean (29 September, 1513). When [Balboa](#) was beheaded by his successor, Pedrarias Dávila, Pizarro followed the fortunes of the latter until 1515 when Dávila sent him to trade with the natives along the Pacific coast. When the capital was transferred to Panama he helped Pedrarias to subjugate the warlike tribes of Veraguas, and in 1520 accompanied Espinosa on his expedition into the territory of the Cacique Urraca, situated in the present Republic of Costa Rica.

In 1522 the accounts of the achievements of Hernán Cortés, and the return of Pascual de Andagoya from his expedition to the southern part of Panama, bringing news of the countries situated along the shore of the ocean to the south, fired him with enthusiasm. With the approbation of Pedrarias he formed together with Diego de Almagro, a soldier of fortune who was at that time in Panama, and Hernando de Luque, a Spanish cleric, a company to conquer the lands situated to the south of Panama. Their project seemed so utterly unattainable that the people of Panama called them the "company of lunatics". Having collected the necessary funds Pizarro placed himself at the head of the expedition; Almagro was entrusted with the equipping and provisioning of the ships; and Luque was to remain behind to look after their mutual interests and to keep in Pedrarias's favour so that he might continue to support the enterprise. In November, 1524, Pizarro set sail from Panama with a party of one hundred and fourteen volunteers and four horses, and Almagro was to follow him in a smaller ship just as soon as it could be made ready. The result of the first expedition was disheartening. Pizarro went no further than Punta Quemada, on the coast of what is now Colombia, and having lost many of his men he went to Chicamá, a short distance from Panama. From here he sent his treasurer, with the small quantity of gold which he had obtained, to the governor to give an account of the expedition. Meanwhile Almagro had followed him, going as far as the Rio de San Juan (Cauca, Colombia), and, not finding him, returned to rejoin him at Chicamá.

A second request to obtain Pedrarias's permission to recruit volunteers for the expedition was met with hostility, because the governor himself was planning an expedition to Nicaragua. Luque, however, contrived to change his attitude, and the new governor, D. Pedro de los Rios, was from the beginning favourably disposed towards the expedition. On 10 March, 1528, the three partners signed a contract, whereby they agreed to divide equally all the territory that should be conquered and all the gold, silver, and precious stones that should be found. They purchased two ships, and Pizarro and Almagro directed their course to the mouth of the San Juan River, where they separated. Pizarro remained with a portion of the soldiers to explore the mainland; Almagro returned to Panama to get re-enlistments; and the other ship under the command of Ruiz set sail for the south. He went as far as Punta de Pasados, half a degree south of the equator, and after making observations and collecting an abundance of information, returned to Pizarro, who in the meantime, together with his companions, had suffered severely. Shortly afterwards Almagro arrived from Panama, bringing soldiers and abundant provisions. Once more re-enforced they started together taking a southerly route until they reached Tacamez, the extreme south of Columbia. They then decided that Almagro should return to Panama, and Pizarro should remain on the Island del Gallo to await further re-enforcements. The arrival of Almagro and the news of the sufferings of the explorers alarmed Pedro de los Rios, who sent two ships to the Island del Gallo with orders to bring back all the members of the expedition. Pizarro and thirteen of his companions refused to return, and the

little party was abandoned on the island. Fearful of being molested by the inhabitants on account of their reduced number, they built a raft and sought refuge on the Island of Gorgona on the coasts of Columbia.

Meanwhile Almagro and Luque endeavoured to pacify the governor who at last consented that a ship be sent, but only with a sufficient force to man it, and with positive orders to Pizarro to present himself at Panama within six months. When the ship arrived without reinforcements Pizarro determined, with the aid of a few men that he still had with him, to undertake an expedition southward. Skirting the coast of the present Republic of Ecuador, he directed his course towards the city of Tumbez in the north of what is now Peru. Seeing that the natives were friendly towards him, he continued his voyage as far as Payta, doubled the point of Aguja, and sailed along the coast as far as the point where the city of Trujillo was later founded. He was everywhere well received, for the Spaniards in obedience to his strict orders had refrained from any excesses that might have incurred the enmity of the Indians and endangered the ultimate result of the expedition. Finally after an absence of eighteen months Pizarro returned to Panama. Notwithstanding the gold he brought and the glowing accounts he gave, the governor withdrew his support and permission to continue the explorations. The three partners then determined that Pizarro should go to Spain and lay his plans before [Charles V.](#)

He landed in Seville in 1528 and was well received by the emperor, then in Toledo, who was won by the account of the proposed expedition, and, 26 June, 1529, signed the memorable agreement (*capitulacion*), in which the privileges and powers of Pizarro and his associates were set forth. On the former, Charles conferred the order of Knight of St. James, the titles of *Adelantado*, Governor and Captain General, with absolute authority in all the territories he might discover and subjugate. A government independent of that of Panama was granted to him in perpetuity, extending two hundred leagues to the south of the River Santiago, the boundary between Colombia and Ecuador. He had the privilege of choosing the officers who were to serve under him, of administering justice as chief constable (*alguacil*), and his orders were revocable only by the *Consejo Real*. Pizarro agreed to take 250 soldiers and provide the boats and ammunition indispensable for such an expedition. He sailed from Seville 18 January, 1530, taking with him his brothers, Hernando, who was the only legitimate son, Juan, and Gonzalo, all of whom were to play an important part in the history of Peru. Arrived in Panama he had the task of pacifying his two associates who were dissatisfied with the scant attention he had secured for them from the Court. Early in January, 1531, Pizarro set sail from the port of Panama with 3 ships, 180 men, and 27 cavaliers. Almagro and Luque remained behind to procure further assistance and send reinforcements. He landed in the Bay of San Mateo near the mouth of the Santiago River, and started to explore the coast on foot. The three boats were sent back to Panama for reinforcements.

The explorers passed by Puerto Viejo and came as far as the city of Tumbez, where they embarked in some Indian rafts and passed over to the Island of Puna in the Gulf of Guayaquil. Here they were hard pressed by the attacks of the islanders, when relief came in the form of two vessels with a hundred men and some horses commanded by Hernando de Soto. Thus reinforced and knowing that the brothers Atahualpa and Huascar were at war with each other, Pizarro determined to penetrate into the interior of the empire and left Tumbez early in May, 1532. On 15 November, after a long, distressing journey and without opposition from the Indians, he entered the city of Caxamalca (now Caxamarca). Treacherously invited into the camp of the Spaniards, the Indian prince Atahualpa presented himself accompanied by his bodyguard but unarmed. At a given signal the Spaniards rushed upon the unsuspecting Indians, massacred them in the most horrible manner, and took possession of their chief. Deprived of its leader the great army that was encamped near Caxamalca, not knowing what to do, retreated into the interior. As the price of his release the Inca monarch offered his captives gold enough to fill the room (22 by 17 feet) in which he was held captive. In a few months the promise was fulfilled. Gold to the amount of 4,605,670 ducats (15,000,000 pesos), according to Garcilaso de la Vega, was accumulated and Atahualpa claimed his freedom. At this juncture Almagro arrived with soldiers to strengthen their position, and naturally insisted that they too should share in the booty. This was agreed to and after the fifth part, the share of the king, had been set apart an adequate division was made of the remainder, a share of \$52,000 falling to the lot of each soldier, even those who had come at the end. Notwithstanding Atahualpa was accused and executed 24 June, 1534.

From Caxamalca he passed to the capital of the Incas, while his lieutenants were obtaining possession of all the remaining territory. In order to keep the Indians together Pizarro had Manco Capac, an Inca, crowned king, and on 6 January, 1535, founded the city of [Lima](#). He obliged Pedro de Alvarado, who had come from Guatemala in search of adventure, to return to his own territory, and sent his brother Hernando to Spain to give an account to the Court of the new empire he had united to the Crown. He was well received by the emperor, who conferred on Pizarro the title of marquess and extended the limits of his territory seventy leagues further along the southern coast. The title of *Adelantado*, besides that of Governor of Chile, which, however, had not yet been conquered, was conferred on Diego de Almagro. Luque was no longer living. Almagro at once set about the conquest of Chile, taking with him all those who were willing to follow.

Manco Capac was meanwhile trying to foment an uprising in the whole of Peru, actually besieging the cities of [Lima](#) and Cuzco. The arrival of Alonso de Alvarado, brother of the companion of Cortés, saved [Lima](#), but Cuzco, where the three brothers of Pizarro were, was only saved by the return of Almagro from his expedition to Chile and his claim that the city of Cuzco was situated in the territory which had been assigned to him in the royal decrees. The Indians were put to flight, Almagro took forcible possession of the city, April, 1537, and made Hernando and Gonzalo prisoners, Juan having died. Troops, however, were hurrying from [Lima](#) to the rescue; Almagro was defeated, taken prisoner, and executed, July, 1538. Hernando went to Spain but was not received well at the Court; he was imprisoned until 1560, and died at the age of one hundred almost in dire poverty. Gonzalo launched on his intrepid expedition to explore the Amazon, returning to find that his brother Francisco was no more. The followers of Almagro, offended by the arrogant conduct of Pizarro and his followers after the defeat and execution of Almagro, organized a conspiracy which ended in Pizarro's assassination of the conqueror of Peru in his palace at [Lima](#).

Pizarro had four children: a son whose name and the name of his mother are not known, and who died in 1544; Gonzalo by an Indian girl, Inés Huailas Yupanqui, who was legitimized in 1537 and died when he was fourteen; by the same woman, a daughter, Francisca, who subsequently married after having been legitimized by imperial decree, together with her uncle Hernando Pizarro, 10 October, 1537; and a son, Francisco, by a relative of Atahualpa, who was never legitimized, and died shortly after reaching Spain

Researched at: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12140a.htm>

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado

The most famous journey ever made in search of treasures in the New World was led by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Seeking the fabled Seven Golden Cities of Cibola, his expedition of 1,400 men and 1,500 animals found only poor Indian villages, but established Spain's later claim to the entire Desert Southwest.

Coronado was born to a noble family of Salamanca, Spain about 1510. As a young man at court he became friendly with Antonio de Mendoza, and when Mendoza was appointed viceroy of New Spain (Mexico) in 1535, Coronado accompanied him to America as his assistant. Within three years of his arrival in Mexico City, Coronado suppressed a slave rebellion, pacified the Indians and married the wealthy Beatriz Estrada, daughter of the colonial treasurer. In 1538 Mendoza appointed Coronado governor of New Galicia, a province in western Mexico.

Mendoza soon became intrigued by the fantastic riches rumored to exist in the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola beyond New Spain's northern frontier. These fabulous cities were first reported by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca who, after being shipwrecked off Florida in 1528, had wandered through what later became Texas and northern Mexico before his rescue in 1536. Mendoza sent an expedition in 1539 under Estéban, a black slave who had been shipwrecked with Cabeza de Vaca, and Fray Marcos de Niza to verify de Vaca's reports. Fray Marcos, assured of the cities' existence by an Indian informant, claimed to have seen them in the distance.

Mendoza organized an ambitious expedition to make a more thorough exploration. It consisted of some 300 Spaniards, hundreds of Indians and native slaves, horses, and herds of sheep, pigs and cattle, in addition to two ships under the command of Hernando de Alarcón, who sailed up the Gulf of California to discover the mouth of the Colorado River on Aug. 26, 1540.

Mendoza made Coronado the commander of the land expedition to seize the treasure. In February 1540, Coronado's main force left Compostela and proceeded up the west coast of Mexico to Culiacán, a northern outpost of New Galicia. From there, the expedition entered what is now the United States in April 1540, along the San Pedro River at the southern end of the Huachuca Mountains. Coronado National Memorial in southern Arizona commemorates this event. Moving northward, Coronado and his advance party of Spanish cavalry came upon the Zuni pueblo of Hawikuh, in western New Mexico, but found no great wealth or treasure. The Zuni did not take well to the usual Spanish demands that they "acknowledge the Church as the ruler and superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope." They fired on Coronado's band and were quickly subdued.

Having found no gold in the Zuni pueblos, Coronado sent out scouting parties that ranged all the way to the Colorado River on the present border between California and Arizona. García López de Cárdenas and his party became the first Europeans to view the Grand Canyon (in modern Arizona). Another found more pueblos in a fertile area of the Rio Grande valley at Kuana (near modern Santa Fe), where the expedition wintered. In the spring of 1541, the force moved into Palo Duro Canyon in present-day Texas, where Coronado left most of his men and proceeded north with 30 horsemen to another supposedly fabulously wealthy country, Quivira (Kansas), only to find a Wichita Indian village

After spending a second winter in Kuana near Santa Fe and realizing that the Golden Cities of Cibola were only the Zuñi, Hopi and Pueblo Indian villages of present-day Arizona and New Mexico, the expedition started homeward. Coronado led only about 100 men into Mexico City in 1542, while the remainder straggled in over the following months. He reported his disappointing findings to Mendoza, who turned on his old protégé and branded the expedition an abject failure. An official inquiry, normally called after such an expedition, brought Coronado an indictment for his conduct, but found him innocent. Coronado continued his governorship

of New Galicia until he was indicted again, and in 1544, found guilty of corruption, negligence and atrocities against Indians under his authority. Coronado returned to Mexico City, where he died the same year, decades before his chronicle of the expedition was finally published.

Researched at: <http://desertusa.com/mag98/sep/papr/coronado.html>

Henry Hudson

Henry Hudson was an Englishman, possibly the grandson of a London alderman who helped found a trading organization, the Muscovy Company.

Hudson was certainly an experienced seaman, commissioned by the Muscovy Company in 1607 to find a quick way from England to the "islands of spicery." He failed in that attempt, and again in 1608 -- each time foiled by ice floes as he attempted to find a fast northerly passage to "the east."

In 1609 the Dutch East India Company, which had a monopoly on trade with the Orient and which wanted to shorten the lengthy and expensive voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, hired Hudson to renew the attempt on its behalf. They provided him with an 80-ton ship, the "[Half Moon](#)," and a crew of 20 -- a combination of Dutch and English sailors.

The "Half Moon" sailed out of Amsterdam on April 4 or 6, and after a difficult journey along the coast of Norway and as far east as the bleak coast of Novaya Zemlya, turned west and headed for warmer climes. Reports claim that Hudson had a trying time with the crew, which threatened to mutiny, but persuaded them to help seek the alternative route to the lucrative spices.

The quest for the North-West passage led first to the coast of Maine where members of the crew went ashore and cut timber to replace the mast of the "Half Moon." They fished and traded with the [Native Americans](#) but continued south to the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. After Hudson decided they weren't entrances to the passage he was seeking, the "Half Moon" sailed north to the mouth of the Hudson River in early September.

An Italian, Giovanni da Verranzano, was the first recorded European to discover the mouth of the river when he was sailing for the French in 1524. He wrote, "we found a very pleasant situation amongst some steep hills ...," but did not continue exploring what he called, "The River of the Steep Hills" and the "Grand River."

On September 12, 1609, Hudson began his exploration of the river. The first night he anchored off the northern tip of Manhattan. The next night, after the crew traded for oysters with Native Americans, the ship was near [Yonkers](#).

On September 14 Hudson thought he may have found the long-sought passage when he saw the wide Tappan Zee but he later became disappointed when he reached the shallower area near Albany and turned back.

The journal of one of the ship's officers, Robert Juet, was published in England in 1625. It notes, "the 14th, in the morning, being very fair weather, the wind southeast, we sailed up the river 12 leagues ... The river is full of fish."

Unfortunately, it is presumed that Hudson's relevant logs were amongst the property of the Dutch East and West India Companies which was sold at auction by the Dutch government in 1821. An attempt by the New York State Legislature to find them in 1841 led the state's agent, John Romeyn Brodhead, to declare, " ... the papers of the West India Company relating to New Netherland ... are now irrecoverably lost." One excerpt, also published in 1625, reports Hudson to have written about the area, "It is as pleasant a land as one can tread upon."

Hudson called the river the "River of Mountains" although the Native Americans, with whom the skipper and crew had considerable contact, called it "Muhheakunnuk" (great waters constantly in motion).

On October 2, as the "Half Moon" neared Manhattan, some Native Americans became hostile and Hudson ordered guns to be fired at them. Several were killed, and the event was remembered 15 years later when the Dutch came to settle in Manhattan in 1624.

The "Half Moon" left the river on October 4, sailed across the Atlantic and, according to Juet, "by the grace of God we safely arrived in the range of Dartmouth, in Devonshire," on Saturday, November 7.

Hudson and the English crew members were not permitted to leave England but eventually the "Half Moon" returned to Holland without them.

In the following year, Hudson made his final journey. A group of wealthy Londoners, who still believed there was a faster route to the east, sent Hudson off as captain of the "Discovery" to find a North-West passage.

He sailed north, via Iceland, into the Hudson Strait and from there into Hudson Bay, which also bears his name. The "Discovery" became trapped by ice in James Bay and was forced to winter over. During that time the crew quarreled and, finally, as the spring thaw began, they mutinied. The ring-leaders, Juet and Henry Greene, set Hudson, his son, and some other men adrift in a small open boat and they were never seen again.

Greene and three other mutineers were later killed by Eskimos and Juet died before the "Discovery," now captained by Robert Bylot, reached England.

The "Half Moon" did not fare much better. A few years later she was wrecked on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean while on a voyage to the Dutch East Indies.

Researched at: <http://www.hudsonriver.com/halfmoonpress/stories/hudson.htm>

Hernan Cortes

1485-1547

CORTES, Hernan, or Hernando, soldier, born in Medellin, Province of Estremadura, Spain, in 1485; died near Seville, 2 Dec., 1547. His parents, Martin Cortes and Catalina Pizarro Altamirano, were both of good family, but in reduced circumstances. He was a sickly child, and at the age of fourteen was sent to the University of Salamanca, but returned home two years later without leave. He then determined upon a life of adventure, and arranged to accompany Nicolas de Ovando, likewise a native of Estremadura, who was about to sail for Santo Domingo to supersede Bobadilla in his command. An accident that happened to him in a love adventure detained him at home, and the expedition sailed without him.

He then sought military service under the celebrated Gonzalo de Cordova, but on his way to Italy was prostrated by sickness in Valencia, where he remained for a year, experiencing great hardship and poverty. Returning to Medellin, he was able in 1504 to sail from San Lucar for Santo Domingo. Ovando received him cordially, and he obtained employment under Diego Valasquez in the suppression of a revolt, on the termination of which he was assigned the control of a large number of Indians, and appointed a notary. He was at this time remarkable for a graceful physiognomy and amiable manner as well as for skill and address in military matters, and he held successively various important offices.

In 1511 he accompanied Diego Velasquez, who was sent out by Diego Columbus to subdue and colonize Cuba. Later he held the office of alcalde of Santiago in the new colony, and meanwhile he married Catalina Juarez, a Spanish lady who had come over in the suite of Maria de Toledo, the vice-queen. After his marriage he employed himself and his Indians in getting gold. "How many of them died in extracting this gold for him, God will have kept a better account than I have," says Las Casas. Grijalva, a lieutenant of Velasquez, had just discovered Mexico, but had made no attempt at its settlement.

This displeased the governor, and Cortes was given the command of a new expedition about to start for the conquest of the newly discovered province. At the last moment, Velasquez appears to have regretted the appointment, possibly fearing that Cortes would carry off all the glory as well as the profit of the enterprise, and endeavored to recall the expedition; but Cortes hastened his preparations, and on the 18th of November, 1518, left Santiago with 10 vessels, 550 Spaniards, nearly 300 Indians, a few Negroes, 10 brass guns, a dozen horses, and some falconets. Collecting stores on his way, he arrived at Trinidad, and later at Havana, at both of which places he found orders from Velasquez depriving him of his command, but in neither place could they be enforced, so, after writing a letter of remonstrance to the governor, he sailed, on 10 Feb., 1519, for the island of Cozumel, on the coast of Yucatan. On 4 March he first landed on the shores of Mexico, in the province of Tabasco, advancing slowly along the gulf. Sometimes taking measures to conciliate the natives and sometimes spreading terror by arms, he finally reached and took possession of the city of Tabasco.

The noise of the artillery, the appearance of the floating fortresses that had transported the Spaniards over the ocean, and the horses on which they fought, all new objects to the natives, inspired them with astonishment, terror, and admiration. At San Juan de Ulua, Cortes first learned that the native ruler was called Montezuma; that he reigned over an extensive empire, which had lasted for three centuries; that thirty vassals called caciques obeyed him; and that his power and riches were very great. These facts induced him to undertake the conquest of the empire. He laid the foundation of the town of Vera Cruz, and caused himself to be chosen captain-general of the new colony, then burning his ships so as to make retreat impossible, and to augment his army by the seamen, and taking the part of several native tribes against the tax-collectors of Montezuma, thus gaining allies, he set out for the city of Mexico, the residence and capital of Montezuma.

The republic of Tlascalala, a province between the coast and the capital, although hostile to Montezuma,

opposed Cortes with its forces. -After four severe battles, in each of which he defeated large numbers of Tlascalans, he entered the capital city of Tlascala on 18 Sept., 1519, and, dictating peace on moderate terms, converted the natives into powerful allies. He endeavored to persuade the Tlascalans to abjure their religion, but in vain, although he succeeded better in prevailing upon them to own themselves vassals of the king of Spain. After a stay of twenty days in this capital he pushed on toward Mexico by Cholula, accompanied by several thousand of his new allies. An attempt was made to check his advance by an ambush prepared by the Cholulans at the instance of the Mexicans; but this he escaped, although not until after he had taken vengeance on the Cholulans. He then continued his march, and reached the city of Mexico early in November, at the head of a force consisting of 6,000 natives and a handful of Spaniards. Ambassadors from Montezuma had met Cortes before he entered Tlascala, and he was now received with great ceremony by the Mexican monarch.

The natives, believing him to be a descendant of the sun, prostrated themselves before him, and he was assigned quarters in one of the beautiful palaces of this magnificent city. This he at once fortified so as to prevent surprise or Capture, and was considering what plans to pursue in order to possess the wealth of the empire when he was informed that an attack had been made on the garrison at Vera Cruz. The importance of this event was very great, for hitherto the Mexicans had believed the Spaniards to be immortal, and the receipt of the head of one of the soldiers only undeceived them. Cortes conceived and executed a most brilliant and daring project, which, being successful, doubtless prevented the massacre of the entire Spanish force. Accompanied by his officers, he went at once to the palace of Montezuma, and, taking him prisoner, threatened him with instant death if he in any way appealed to his people; then, having captured the Mexicans who had participated in the attack on Vera Cruz, he burned them alive in front of the imperial palace. Meanwhile he placed Montezuma in irons, and compelled him to acknowledge himself a vassal of Charles V. Caminatzin, the bravest of Montezuma's nephews, was likewise made prisoner, and, with many of the nobles of the empire, induced to take the oath of allegiance to the king of Spain.

Soon after the Mexican ruler was restored to a semblance of liberty, but not until he presented Cortes with 600,000 marks of pure gold and a large quantity of precious stones. Scarcely had he accomplished all this when he received intelligence that an army under Narvaez had been sent by Velasquez to compel him to renounce his command. Leaving 200 men in Mexico under the command of a lieutenant whom he recommended to the care of Montezuma as a vassal of Charles V., he marched with 70 men, and, after being joined by 150 more, whom he had left at Cholula, captured Narvaez, who had en-camped near the city of the Cempovallans with a force of 900 men, 80 horses, and 10 or 12 pieces of artillery. The defeated troops, after the death of their leader, readily joined the army of Cortes and returned with him to Mexico, where he found that the people had risen against the Spaniards. Montezuma, still a prisoner, endeavored to pacify his subjects, but was attacked by the mob and so injured by stones that he died in a few days. A new emperor was chosen, under whose leadership they attacked the Spaniards and drove them out of the city. Cortes's rear-guard was cut to pieces, and, after a harassing retreat of six days, the Mexicans offered battle on the plains of Otumba. With the advantages offered by his artillery and fire-arms, Cortes, on 7 July, 1520, gained a great victory, which decided the fate of Mexico. The celebrated *noche-triste* (or "unhappy night") tree, [shown here](#), is in the village of Popotla, near an old church in the environs of Mexico. Cortes is said to have sat under this tree lamenting his misfortune after the retreat of the Spaniards during the night of the evacuation. The tree is known by the Indians as the "ahuehuete," and in Spanish is called "sabino." It is a species of cedar and is ten feet in diameter at the base, about forty feet in height, and surrounded by a substantial iron railing. After his success, Cortes proceeded to Tlascala, where he collected an army of natives, and again marched against the city of Mexico, which, after a gallant defense of seventy-seven days, was retaken on 13 Aug., 1521.

The extent of his conquest, due entirely to his genius, valor, and profound but unscrupulous policy, caused his irregularities to be forgiven by his sovereign, who, disregarding the pretensions of Velasquez, appointed Cortes governor and captain-general of Mexico, also conferring on him the marquisate of Oajaca with a considerable revenue. His course of conquest, however, was not such as to conciliate the natives: he was over-zealous to destroy their idols, and anxious to convert them to Christianity, even using force for this purpose. These actions so embittered the Mexicans that, reduced to despair, they again revolted, but in vain. The

arms, valor, and zeal of the Spaniards succeeded everywhere. Guatimozin, the new emperor, a man of much greater force than Montezuma, was, with a number of the caciques, accused of conspiring against the conquerors, and was publicly executed with circumstances of great cruelty by Cortes. Meanwhile his successes produced jealousies in Madrid, his ambition and great popularity with the soldiers caused him to be feared, and commissioners were sent to watch his conduct and thwart his proceedings. While he was engaged in conquest, his property was seized and his retainers imprisoned and put in irons.

Indignant at such treatment, Cortes returned to Spain to appeal to the justice of his master, and presented himself with great splendor before the court. He was received by Charles with every distinction, and decorated with the order of Santiago. Cortes returned to Mexico with new titles and honors, but with diminished power, a viceroy having been entrusted with the administration of civil affairs, although Cortes still retained military authority, with permission to continue his conquests. This division of power led to continual dissension, and caused the failure of several enterprises in which Cortes was engaged; but in 1536 he discovered the peninsula of California and surveyed part of the gulf that separates it from Mexico. Subsequently, however, tired of struggling with unworthy adversaries, he returned to Europe, hoping to confound his enemies. He was coldly received by Charles ; but, concealing his feelings, he served in the disastrous expedition to Algiers in 1541. During this unfortunate campaign, which was his last, he served with great bravery; and, had his advice been heeded, the Spanish arms would have been saved from disgrace, and Europe delivered nearly three centuries earlier from the scourge of organized piracy.

On his return he was utterly neglected, and could scarcely obtain an audience. On one occasion he forced his way through a crowd that surrounded the emperor's carriage, and mounted on the doorstep. The emperor, astounded at such audacity, demanded of him who he was. "*I am a man,*" replied Cortes proudly, "*who has given you more provinces than your ancestors left you cities.*" This declaration of services could scarcely fail to offend the proud monarch, and Cortes retired to Seville, where he passed the remainder of his days in solitude. Five letters addressed to Charles V., detailing his conquests, are his only writings. See "*Letters and Dispatches of Cortes,*" translated by George Folsom (New York, 1843); Prescott's "*Conquest of Mexico*" (Boston, 1843); and Sir Arthur Helps's "*Life of Hernando Cortes*" (London, 1871). -- *Edited Appleton's American Biography*
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Hernando de Soto

1469-1542

DE SOTO, Fernando, Spanish discoverer, born in Xeres de los Caballeros, Estremadura, Spain, about 1496; died on the banks of the Mississippi in June 1542. He was the descendant of a noble but impoverished family, and was indebted to Pedrarias Davila for the means of pursuing a course at the University, where he distinguished himself in literary studies and in athletic performances. In 1519 he accompanied Davila, who had been made governor of Darien, on his second expedition to America, during which he showed great ability and determination of character, especially as an opponent of the oppressive measures of his superior officers. He served on the expedition to Nicaragua in 1527 under Hernandez, who afterward perished by the hand of Davila in consequence of not heeding his advice. In 1528 he withdrew from the service of his patron and explored the coasts and Yucatan for upward of 700 miles in search of a strait, which was supposed to connect the two oceans. Later he joined Pizarro in his expedition to Peru, with the promise of being made second in command.

In 1533 he was sent with fifty horsemen and a few targeteers to explore the highlands of Peru. He penetrated through a pass in the mountains, and discovered the great national road that led to the Peruvian capital. De Soto was sent by Pizarro as ambassador to visit the Inca Atahualpa, after whose capture he expostulated with his chief for treacherously refusing to release the Peruvian monarch, but in vain, although an immense sum had been paid for his ransom. He was prominent in the engagements that completed the conquest of Peru, and was the hero of the battle that resulted in the capture of Cuzco. Subsequently De Soto, who had landed in America with nothing of his own save his sword and target., returned to Spain with a fortune of \$500,000, which enabled him to marry the daughter of his old patron Davila, to whom he had long been attached, and to maintain "all the state that the house of a nobleman requireth." The tales of returned adventurers fostered a belief in Spain that the treasures of the northern hemisphere would be found to rival in value the riches of Peru" and De Soto, in his desire to excel Cortes in glory and surpass Pizarro in wealth, sought permission from Charles V. to conquer Florida at his own expense. This privilege was readily conceded, and De Soto was made governor of Cuba. Volunteers for the expedition assembled in great numbers, both from Spain and Portugal, and De Soto selected from the "flower of the peninsula" only those who were in the "bloom of life," and, with a force of 600 men, 24 ecclesiastics, and 20 officers, sailed early in April from San Lucar. The fleet soon reached Santiago de Cuba, and then stopped at Havana, where the women were to remain until after the conquest. Leaving his wife in command, he crossed the gulf of Mexico and anchored in the bay of Espiritu Santo (now Tampa bay) on 25 May 1539.

When the soldiers were landed, De Soto, confident of success, sent his ships back to Cuba, and at the head of his followers began the long search for gold. His forces were greater in numbers and more perfect in equipment than those that had triumphed over the empires of Mexico and Peru. Everything was provided that former experience could suggest; chains for captives, the implements of a forge, weapons of all kinds then in use, bloodhounds as auxiliaries against the natives, ample stores of food, and finally a drove of hogs, which would soon swarm in the favoring climate, where the forests furnished them with abundant sustenance. To the greed for wealth religious zeal was added, priests with their assistants accompanying the expedition. Ornaments for the service of the mass were provided, and every festival was to be kept, every religious practice observed. The route was through a country already made hostile by the violence of the Spanish invader, Narvaez, and the Indians, in their efforts to rid themselves of the Spaniards, continually lured them onward by stories of wealth in regions still remote, which receded as the expedition advanced. They marched northward at first, and then passed into the country of the Appalachians, where they spent the winter. Juan Ortiz, who had been captured by the Indians from Narvaez. and enslaved by them, could give no account of any land where gold or silver was to be found. An exploring party discovered Ochus, the harbor of Pensacola, and a message was sent to Cuba, desiring that in the following year supplies might be sent to that place. Meanwhile, discontent had arisen among

the Spaniards, and when they appealed to De Soto to return. he refused, saying" "I will not turn back till I have seen the poverty of the country with my own eyes."

In March 1540, they resumed their March proceeding in a northeasterly direction, and on 18 October reached the village of Marilla or Mobile, on Alabama River, where, in an engagement with the natives, the Spaniards lost more than 80 men and 42 horses, and it was claimed that 2,500 Indians were killed. Ships had meanwhile arrived at Oehus, but De Soto proudly refused to send back any message of his fortunes. He then went to the northwest, and passed his second winter in the country of the Chickasaws. In the spring of 1541 he made a demand on the chief of these Indians for 200 men to carry the burdens of the company. The chief hesitated, and in the night fired the village where the Spaniards were encamped. Forty of De Soto's followers perished in the flames, and all the baggage was destroyed. A delay of some weeks ensued, during which forges were erected, swords newly tempered, and ashen lances made. In April De Soto resumed his march in a northwesterly direction, and, after journeying for seven days through a wilderness of forest and marshes, reached the Mississippi river. A month was spent on the banks, constructing barges large enough to hold three horsemen each, and then the army passed over to the western side ; thence northward to Pacaha, where he remained ten days, and then marched successively southwest and northwest till he reached the highlands of White River, which was the western limit of the expedition. Turning south, he proceeded on his journey, passing by the hot springs of Arkansas, which his companions at first supposed to be the fabled fountain of youth, and spent his third winter in Antiamque, on Washita river. In the following spring De Soto determined to descend this River to its junction. He finally reached the Mississippi again, and while descending its banks was stricken with malignant fever. Worn out by long disappointments, and his pride changed to a wasting melancholy, he realized that death was near at hand. He gathered his followers around him, and, after appointing Luis de Moscoso his successor, succumbed to the disease on the following day.

The news of his death was carefully kept from the Indians, by whom he was regarded as possessing supernatural powers, and at midnight, wrapped in his mantle, the body of the great discoverer was lowered into the waters of the River he had discovered. His followers, reduced to half their original numbers, passed the ensuing winter in the country of the Natchitoches, and in the spring returned to the Mississippi, where they built seven frail boats, in which they drifted down to the gulf of Mexico, and then followed the shore to the Mexican town of Panuco, where they dispersed. De Soto's wife expired in Havana three days after hearing of his fate. See "Life, Travels, and Adventures of Ferdinand de Soto," by Lambert A. Wilmer (Philadelphia,. 1858); "Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto in the Conquest of Florida, as told by a Knight of Elvas, and in a Relation by Liuus Hernandez de Biedura, factor of the Expedition," translated by Buckingham Smith (New York, 1866), being number five of the Bradford club series; and Bantroll's "History of the United States" (vol. i., New York, 1885).

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John Cabot

CABOT, John (Italian, Giovanni Caboto, or Zuan Calbot, or Caboto, Venetian dialect), discoverer of the mainland of North America. The time and place of his birth are not positively known. His name first occurs in the Venetian archives, ere it appears he was accorded the rights of a citizen on 28 March, 1476 after the required fifteen years' residence. It is known that in 1495 he was, and probably had been for years, an English subject, residing at Bristol. Under date of 5 March, 1496, a patent was issued by authority of the king, Henry VII., licensing Cabot and his three sons, or either of them, their heirs or assigns, to search for islands, provinces, or regions, in the eastern, western, or northern seas; and, as vassals of the king, to occupy the territories that might be found, with an exclusive right to their commerce, on paying the king a fifth part of all profits. Under this authority, Cabot, with his son Sebastian, sailed in May, 1497, and held a westward course for an estimated distance of 700 leagues.

On 24 June land was sighted, which he believed to be part of the dominions of the Grand Chain, but which was really the coast of Labrador. This shore he coasted for 300 leagues, finding no evidences of human habitation, and then set sail for home, reaching Bristol in August. At this time, owing mainly to the discoveries of Columbus, the theory that the earth is a sphere had gained general acceptance among advanced thinkers, and it was believed that the shortest route to the Indies lay westward. Cabot's discovery therefore caused much excitement among the adventurous spirits of the day, and on 3 Feb., 1498, the king issued a special charter, granting to John Cabot authority to impress six English ships at the rates then current for vessels required by the royal navy, to enlist crews, and to follow up his discoveries of the preceding year. Under this charter Cabot made no voyages. It has erroneously been called a second charter, but did not in any way set aside that of 1496, which still remained valid. It is, however, the last record of his career, and it is uncertain when or where he died. He was probably a Venetian by birth, as he is named in the charter of 1498 "Kabotto, Venecian," and his wife was a Venetian. Had there been any possibility of proving him an Englishman, the claim would undoubtedly have been pressed.

The authorities concerning his voyages are : 1. A letter from Lorenzo Pasquaiigo, a merchant residing in London, to his brother in Venice, bearing date 23 Aug., 1497; 2. The legend on the map of Sebastian Cabot, cited by Hakluyt and giving 24 June, 1497, as the date of discovery; 3. An Oxford copy of Sebastian's map, on which the date was 1494, with several other authorities giving that year, instead of 1497, as the correct date. But the only official documents the two charters of Henry VII. agree in fixing the date as first given. Much light has been shed upon the life of Cabot by the researches of Rawdon Brown, of England. See "Jean and Sebastian Cabot," by Henri HARRISSE (Paris, 1882). *Edited Appleton's American Biography* [Copyright](#) 2000 by *Virtualology*TM

Juan Ponce de León

Explorer, b. at San Servas in the province of Campos, 1460; d. in Cuba, 1521. He was descended from an ancient and noble family; the surname of León was acquired through the marriage of one of the Ponces to Doña Aldonza de León, a daughter of Alfonso IX. As a lad Ponce de León served as page to Pedro Nuñez de Guzmán, later the tutor of the brother of [Charles V](#), the Infante Don Fernando. In 1493, Ponce sailed to Hispaniola (San Domingo) with [Columbus](#) on his second voyage, an expedition which included many aristocratic young men, and adventurous noblemen who had been left without occupation after the fall of Granada. When Nicolás Ovando came to Hispaniola in 1502 as governor, he found the natives in a state of revolt, and in the war which followed Ponce rendered such valuable services that he was appointed Ovando's lieutenant with headquarters in a town in the eastern part of the island. While here, he heard from the Indians that there was much wealth in the neighbouring Island of Buriquien ([Porto Rico](#)), and he asked and obtained permission to visit it in 1508, where he discovered many rich treasures; for his work in this expedition he was appointed *Adelantado* or Governor of Boriquien. Having reduced the natives, he was soon afterward removed from office, but not until he had amassed a considerable fortune. At this time stories of Eastern Asia were prevalent which told of a famous spring the waters of which had the marvellous virtue of restoring to youth and vigour those who drank them. Probably the Spaniards heard from the Indians tales that reminded them of this *Fons Juventutis*, and they got the idea that this fountain was situated on an island called Bimini which lay to the north of Hispaniola.

Ponce obtained from [Charles V](#), 23 February, 1512, a patent authorizing him to discover and people the Island of Bimini, giving him jurisdiction over the island for life, and bestowing upon him the title of *Adelantado*. On 3 March, 1513, Ponce set out from San German ([Porto Rico](#)) with three ships, fitted out at his own expense. Setting his course in a northwesterly direction, eleven days later he reached Guanahani, where [Columbus](#) first saw land. Continuing his way, on [Easter Sunday](#) (*Pascua de Flores*), 27 March, he came within sight of the coast which he named Florida in honour of the day and on account of the luxuriant vegetation. On 2 April he landed at a spot a little to the north of the present site of St. Augustine and formally took possession in the name of the Crown. He now turned back, following the coast to its southern extremity and up the west coast to latitude 27°30', and then returned to [Porto Rico](#). During this trip he had several encounters with the natives, who showed great courage and determination in their attacks, which probably accounts for the fact that Ponce did not attempt to found a settlement or penetrate into the interior in search of the treasure which was believed to be hidden there. Although his first voyage had been without result as far as the acquisition of gold and slaves, and the discovery of the "fountain of youth" were concerned, Ponce determined to secure possession of his new discovery. Through his friend, Pedro Nuñez de Guzmán, he secured a second grant dated 27 September, 1514, which gave him power to settle the Island of Bimini and the Island of Florida, for such he thought Florida to be. In 1521 he set out with two ships and landing upon the Florida coast, just where, it is not known, he was furiously attacked by the natives while he was building houses for his settlers. Finally driven to re-embark, he set sail for Cuba, where he died of the wound which he had received.

Researched at: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12228a.htm>

Vasco da Gama

Vasco da Gama is famous for his completion of the first all water trade route between Europe and India. Da Gama's father, Estavao, had originally been chosen by King Joao II to make this historic voyage, but he died before he could complete the mission. It is also said that the opportunity was then given to da Gama's brother, Paulo, who turned it down. The trip needed to be made, and as a last choice, King Emmanuel looked to da Gama to complete the mission.

Vasco da Gama was born in Sines, Portugal in 1469. Being the son of the town's governor, he was educated as a nobleman and served in the court of King Joao II. Da Gama also served as a navel officer, and in 1492 he commanded a defense of Portuguese colonies from the French on the coast of Guinea. Da Gama was then given the mission to take command of the first Portuguese expedition around Africa to India.

When Vasco da Gama set out on July 8, 1497 he and his crew planned and equipped four ships. Goncalo Alvares commanded the flagship Sao (Saint) Gabriel. Paulo, da Gama's brother, commanded the Sao Rafael. The other two ships were the Berrio and the Starship. Most of the men working on the ship were convicts and were treated as expendable. On the voyage, da Gama set out from Lisbon, Portugal, rounded the Cape of Good Hope on November 22, and sailed north. Da Gama made various stops along the coast of Africa in trading centers such as Mombasa, Mozambique, Malindi, Kenya, and Quilmana.

As the ships sailed along the east coast of Africa, many conflicts arose between the Portuguese and the Muslims who had already established trading centers along the coast. The Muslim traders in Mozambique and Mombasa did not want interference in their trade centers. Therefore, they perceived the Portuguese as a threat and tried to seize the ships. In Malindi, on the other hand, the Portuguese were well received, because the ruler was hoping to gain an ally against Mombasa, the neighboring port. From Malindi, da Gama was accompanied the rest of the way to India by Ahmad Ibn Majid, a famous Arab pilot.

Vasco da Gama finally arrived in Calicut, India on May 20, 1498. Calicut was the principle market of trade for precious stones, pearls, and spices. At first, the Portuguese were well received and accepted by the Hindu ruler. There was a great ceremony, and da Gama was taken to a Hindu temple. However, this immediate reaction did not last. The ruler later felt insulted by the gifts that Vasco da Gama brought, because they were of little value to him. Da Gama was not able to establish his trading station or negotiate a trading agreement, because the Zamorin (samudrin raja, the Hindu King) did not want to alienate the local merchants. The Portuguese goods that had been well accepted in Africa were not suitable for the prestigious Indian market. The Muslim merchants despised the Portuguese interference in their business and often threatened to not trade with them. Finally, when da Gama wanted to leave, the Zamorin told him that he had to pay a heavy tax and leave all the Portuguese goods as a form of collateral. Da Gama was enraged, and on August 29, 1498, da Gama and his crew departed with all of their possessions and five hostages. Da Gama also took a letter from the Zamorin stating that the Zamorin would trade spices and gems if the Portuguese could get scarlet cloth, coral, silver, and gold.

Vasco da Gama and his crew departed in August 1498 and reached Lisbon in September of 1499. The return trip took so long because many of the sailors died of diseases such as scurvy. When Vasco da Gama returned, he was rewarded with a great celebration. Da Gama was looked upon as a hero, and King Manoel awarded him with titles and a large income.

When Vasco da Gama went out on his second expedition on February 12, 1502, he was prepared for an encounter with the Muslim traders. He set sail with 20 well-armed ships, hoping to force his way into the market and to get revenge on the Muslims for the opposition in 1498. Da Gama killed many innocent Indians and Muslims. In one instance, da Gama waited for a ship to return from Mecca, a Muslim trading and religious center. The Portuguese overtook the ship and seized all the merchandise. Then they locked the 380 passengers in the hold and set the ship on fire. It took four days for the ship to sink, killing all men, women, and children.

When da Gama arrived in Calicut on October 30, 1502, the Zamorin was willing to sign a treaty. Da Gama told him that he would have to banish all of the Muslims. To demonstrate his power, da Gama hung 38 fishermen; cut off their heads, feet, and hands; and floated the dismembered corpses onto the shore. Later da Gama bombarded the city with guns and forced his way into the trading system. This led the way for other Portuguese conquests in the East Indies.

In February of 1503, da Gama returned home. During his final voyage to India, da Gama got sick and died on December 24, 1524. Vasco da Gama's remains were taken back to Portugal, where he was buried in the chapel where he had prayed before his first voyage.

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Vasco Nunez de Balboa

1475-1519

BALBOA, Vasco Nunez de, Spanish discoverer, born in Xeres de los Caballeros, Extremadura, Spain, in 1475; died in Castilla de Ore, Darien, in 1517. He was a bankrupt nobleman who escaped from his creditors to Hispaniola and afterward joined an expedition under Martin Fernandez do Enciso, one of Ojeda's lieutenants, to the latter's Darien colony of San Sebastian. After meeting with misfortune through shipwreck and hostile natives, and learning of the destruction and abandonment of the colony, they finally founded a town, which they called Santa Maria de la Antigua de Darien. Enciso forbade his men to trade with the natives, and was deposed by Balboa, who claimed that they were no longer within the boundaries of Ojeda's province, and hence owed his lieutenant no obedience. The settlement split into factions, and finally Enciso and Zamudio, tile latter as Balboa's representative, were sent to Spain to lay their grievances before the king.

In the meanwhile Balboa explored the country, gained the good will of the natives by his treatment of them, and was told of a sea that lay southward, and of a land where gold abounded (Peru). He was now commissioned as governor of Antigua by Admiral Diego Columbus; but, hearing from Spain that the king inclined to side with Enciso, he determined to discover the new sea of which he had heard, mid so atone for his faults, he left Antigua for this purpose on 1 Sept., 1513, and after laboring on for many days amid tangled forests, up rugged heights, fighting the natives continually, until the explorers were exhausted, foot-sore, and famished, they ascended a mountain on the morning of the 25th, whence he saw the new sea. Balboa named it "Mar del Sur," and took possession of it and all its coasts in the name of his royal master and mistress. Three days later he reached the beach at a place still known by the name he gave it, the gulf of San Miguel. After a short voyage of exploration and the collection of tribute from neighboring tribes, he set out for home, and reached Antigua in safety in January, 1514, after what must be considered a wonderful exploit when we take into account his small force and the almost insurmountable difficulties of the route. But Balboa's exploit was in vain.

A new governor, Pedrarias, arrived at Antigua in the following June, and his predecessor was put on trial on various charges, He was acquitted of the most serious, but was sentenced to pay a large fine. Soon after this the king of Spain, hearing of Balboa's great discovery, gave him a special commission to explore the shore of the "southern sea," and made him governor of Panama and Coyba.

Pedrarias with held this commission at first, but, becoming reconciled to Balboa, finally allowed him to begin preparations for his voyage, and promised him his daughter in marriage. Vessels were built, though with difficulty, on the Pacific side-of the isthmus, and Balboa, after making a few unimportant discoveries, sent his friend Garabito to investigate a rumor that Pedrarias had been superseded. The rumor was untrue, and Garabito, proving a false friend, told the governor that Balboa had no idea of marrying his daughter, but intended to found for himself a government on the shores of the Pacific. Pedrarias was enraged at this, enticed Balboa within his grasp, and secured his conviction on a charge of treason, together with charges on which he had previously been acquitted.

The next day Balboa with four of his companions were executed, protesting to the last his innocence and loyalty. See Quintana's "Vidas de Espafioles celebres" (3 vols., 1807-'34); Irving's "Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus" (New York, 1831); and Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America" (Boston, 1884).