

Christopher Columbus

Columbus, Christopher (1451-1506), Italian Spanish navigator who sailed west across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a route to Asia but achieved fame by making landfall in the Americas instead. On October 12, 1492, two worlds unknown to each other met for the first time on a small island in the Caribbean Sea. While on a voyage for Spain in search of a direct sea route from Europe to Asia, Christopher Columbus unintentionally discovered the Americas. However, in four separate voyages to the Caribbean from 1492 to 1504, he remained convinced that he had found the lands that Marco Polo reached in his overland travels to China at the end of the 13th century. To Columbus it was only a matter of time before a passage was found through the Caribbean islands to the fabled cities of Asia. Columbus was not the first European to reach the Americas—Vikings from Scandinavia had briefly settled on the North American coast, in what is now Newfoundland, Canada, in the late 10th or early 11th century. However, Columbus's explorations had a profound impact on the world. They led directly to the opening of the western hemisphere to European colonization; to large-scale exchanges of plants, animals, cultures, and ideas between the two worlds; and, on a darker note, to the deaths of millions of indigenous American peoples from war, forced labor, and disease.

Bartolomeu Dias

(1450?-1500), Portuguese navigator, first to round the Cape of Good Hope, Africa. In 1481 he commanded a vessel in a flotilla that King John II of Portugal sent to the Gold Coast of Africa. Five years later, the king gave Dias command of an expedition to continue the exploration of the western coast of Africa, begun in 1482 by the navigator Diogo Cam, who had sailed south to a point near Walvis Bay. Dias set sail from Lisbon in August 1487; in February 1488 he rounded the southern end of the African continent as far as the estuary of what was later named the Great Fish River. Dias thus opened a sea route from Europe to East Asia, which European merchants and statesmen considered essential to the prosperity of Europe.

On his return voyage, Dias stopped at the tablelands at the southeastern end of Africa, which he named Cabo Tormentoso, or Cape of Storms. King John later gave it the name Cabo da Bõa Esperança, or Cape of Good Hope. Dias explored a total of about 2028 km (about 1260 mi) of previously unknown African coast. He returned to Lisbon in December 1488. In 1500 he sailed in an expedition under the Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral and participated in the exploration of Brazil. Dias later perished in a storm off the Cape of Good Hope. His name is also spelled Diaz.

Vasco da Gama

(1469?-1524), Portuguese explorer and navigator, who was the first European to reach India by the sea route.

Da Gama was born in Sines, Alemtejo (now Baixo Alentejo). In his youth he participated in the wars against Castile. Commissioned by Manuel, king of Portugal, to reach India by sea, da Gama sailed from Lisbon with four ships on July 9, 1497. In November he rounded the Cape of Good Hope (first rounded in 1488 by the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias) and anchored at Malindi on the east coast of Africa. With the aid of a pilot secured through Indian merchants in that port, da Gama directed his course eastward and on May 20, 1498, reached Calicut (now Kozhikode) on the Malabar Coast of India. Because of the hostility of Muslim merchants, he could not establish a Portuguese trading station there. After fighting his way out of the harbor of Calicut, he returned to Portugal in 1499. Da Gama was welcomed with praise, rewarded financially, and permitted to use the prefix Dom with his name. To follow up the discoveries of da Gama, the Portuguese navigator Pedro

Álvares Cabral was immediately dispatched to India, and he established a Portuguese trading post in Calicut. When news reached Portugal that those stationed in Calicut by Cabral had been massacred, da Gama, who had been given the title of admiral of India, was sent to avenge that act. On the route to Calicut he established Portuguese colonies at Mozambique and Sofala (now part of Mozambique), in east Africa. After arriving in Calicut, da Gama subdued the inhabitants and forced the raja to make peace. Bearing a rich cargo of spice, he left India and sailed back to Portugal in 1503. For the next 20 years he saw no active sea duty. He received the title of count of Vidigueira in 1519, and in 1524 he was named viceroy and sent to India to correct the mounting corruption among the Portuguese authorities there.

Da Gama reached India in the fall of 1524, but he died in Cochin only three months after his arrival.

Amerigo Vespucci

(Latin Americus Vesputius) (1454-1512), Italian navigator, for whom the continents of North and South America are named. He was born in Florence. In 1495 he took over the business of a merchant in Seville, Spain, who had furnished supplies to ships voyaging to the West Indies. Vespucci later set out for the New World himself and left accounts and maps of four voyages.

Most scholars agree that Vespucci explored a large section of the northern coast of South America during an expedition led by Spanish soldier Alonso de Ojeda in 1499 and 1500. Most also believe that he might have explored part of that continent's eastern coast on a subsequent voyage. German geographer and cartographer Martin Waldseemüller, who translated Vespucci's narrative in 1507, suggested that it might be proper to name the new continent America, an adaptation of the explorer's given name of Amerigo. Applied first to the southern continent, the name gradually came into use as that of the two western continents after it appeared on a planisphere published by Waldseemüller in 1516.

Vasco Nunez de Balboa

(1475?-1519), Spanish explorer in America. He was born in Jerez de los Caballeros, Spain. Considered the first of the conquistadors (leaders of the Spanish conquest in the western hemisphere), Balboa is best known as the first European to see the Pacific Ocean. Balboa sailed to Venezuela in 1501 with an expedition led by Rodrigo de Bastidas. After exploring the southwestern Caribbean area with Bastidas, he became a planter on the island of Hispaniola. By 1510 the plantation had failed. Deep in debt and anxious to escape his creditors, Balboa fled to the settlement of San Sebastián on the coast of Colombia. When he found that San Sebastián had been attacked by Native Americans and was in ruins, Balboa persuaded its settlers to move to the Isthmus of Panama, which he had explored with Bastidas. There they founded a new settlement at Darién, and Balboa was elected governor. He arrested the expedition leader, whom Spain had chosen as governor, and sent him back to Spain. Balboa explored the inland areas and brought the Native Americans under Spanish rule. Unlike later conquistadors, he utilized diplomacy instead of force in dealing with the Native Americans. In 1513 Balboa was accused of treason by his enemies in Spain, who turned the king against him. In hope of winning the king's favor with some new discovery, Balboa decided to find the rumored great sea on the other side of the isthmus. In September 1513, with 190 Spanish soldiers and 1000 Native Americans, he made the arduous westward journey from the Atlantic side of the isthmus through some of the thickest jungles on the continent. On September 29 he reached his destination, named it Mar del Sur (South Sea), and claimed it for Spain. It was later named the Pacific Ocean by Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan in 1520. Balboa notified Spain of his discovery and sent gifts of gold and pearls he had found. The king, however, sent a new governor, Pedrarias Dávila, to be Balboa's superior. The two became bitter rivals. Balboa's successes caused Pedrarias to envy and

hate him. Pedrarias had him arrested, convicted of treason, and beheaded in January 1519. Panama honors Balboa by naming its monetary unit, the balboa, after him.

Ferdinand Magellan

(1480?-1521), Portuguese-born Spanish explorer and navigator, leader of the first expedition to circumnavigate, or sail completely around, the world. He was born in northern Portugal. Magellan set out to reach the East Indies by sailing westward from Europe, which no one was sure could be done. He intended to return by the same route, but after his death his crews found that the prevailing winds required them to keep sailing west, around the world.

Hernando Cortez

(1485-1547), Spanish explorer and conqueror of the Aztec Empire of Mexico. Cortés was born in Medellín, Extremadura. He studied law at the University of Salamanca but cut short his university career in 1501 and decided to try his fortune in the Americas. Cortés sailed for Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) in the spring of 1504. In 1511 he joined Spanish soldier and administrator Diego Velázquez in the conquest of Cuba and subsequently became alcalde (mayor) of Santiago de Cuba. In 1518 Cortés persuaded Velázquez, who had become governor of Cuba, to give him the command of an expedition to Mexico. The mainland had been discovered the year before by Spanish soldier and explorer Francisco Fernández de Córdoba and subsequently by Juan de Grijalva, nephew of Velázquez.

On February 19, 1519, Cortés, with a force of some 600 men, fewer than 20 horses, and 10 field pieces, set sail from Cuba. He left despite the cancellation of his commission by Velázquez, who had become suspicious that Cortés, once in a position to establish himself independently, would refuse to recognize his authority. Cortés sailed along the coast of Yucatán and in March 1519 landed in Mexico, subjugating the town of Tabasco. From the native inhabitants of Tabasco, Cortés learned of the Aztec Empire and its ruler, Montezuma II.

Cortés took numerous captives, one of whom, Malinche (baptized Marina), became his mistress; out of loyalty to him she acted as the interpreter, guide, and counselor for the Spaniards. Finding a better harbor a little north of San Juan, the Spaniards moved there and established a town, La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz (now Veracruz). Cortés organized an independent government, and renouncing the authority of Velázquez, acknowledged only the supreme authority of the Spanish crown. In order to prevent those of his small force who opposed this movement from deserting him and carrying the news to Cuba, Cortés destroyed his fleet.

After negotiations with Montezuma, who tried to persuade Cortés not to enter the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlán, Cortés started his famous march inland. He overcame the native Tlaxcalans and then formed an alliance with them against the Aztecs, their enemies. From that time until the conquest was achieved, the Tlaxcalans continued to be the most important of all the native allies of the Spaniards.

Montezuma pursued an irresolute policy during Cortés's march, and finally determined not to oppose the Spanish invaders but to await their arrival at the Aztec capital and to learn more about their purposes. On November 8, 1519, Cortés and his small force, with some 600 native allies, entered the city and established headquarters in one of its large communal dwellings. Some accounts say that the Aztecs may have believed Cortés was Quetzalcoatl, a legendary god-king who was light-skinned and bearded and, according to a prophecy, was expected to return from the east. The Spanish soldiers were allowed to roam through the city at their pleasure and found much gold and other treasures in the storehouses. Despite the amicable reception given the Spaniards, Cortés had reason to believe that attempts would be made to drive him out. To safeguard his position, he seized Montezuma as hostage and forced him to swear allegiance to Charles I, king of Spain, and to

provide a ransom of an enormous sum in gold and jewels. Meanwhile Velázquez dispatched an expedition under the Spanish soldier Pánfilo de Narváez to Mexico. In April 1520, Cortés received word that Narváez had arrived on the coast. Leaving 200 men at Tenochtitlán under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, an explorer who had also been with Grijalva, Cortés marched with a small force to the coast, entered the Spanish camp at night, captured Narváez, and induced the majority of the Spaniards to join his force.

Meanwhile harsh rules by Alvarado had aroused the Aztecs in the capital. An Aztec revolt against the Spaniards and their own imprisoned ruler, Montezuma, was under way when Cortés returned to the city. He was allowed to enter with his followers and to join Alvarado, but thereupon was immediately surrounded and attacked. At Cortés's request, Montezuma addressed the Aztecs in an attempt to quell the revolt. The Aztec ruler was stoned, and he died three days later. The Spanish and their allies were driven out of the city by a group of Aztecs on a dark, rainy night, the famous Noche Triste ("Sad Night"), June 30, 1520. The Aztecs pursued the retreating Spanish troops. On July 7, 1520, after defeating a very large force of Aztecs, Cortés finally reached Tlaxcala. There, during the summer, he reorganized his army with the aid of some reinforcements and equipment from Vera Cruz. Cortés then began his return to the capital, capturing outlying Aztec outposts on the way. On August 13, 1521, after a desperate siege of three months, Cuauhtémoc, the new emperor, was captured, and Tenochtitlán fell.

Cortés built Mexico City on the ruins of Tenochtitlán. Colonists were brought over from Spain, and the city became the principal European city in America. Cortés consolidated control over Mexico, inflicting great cruelty on the indigenous peoples. The popularity that Cortés achieved in Spain because of his conquests and the riches he had sent resulted in his being named governor and captain general of New Spain in 1523. Cortés then undertook an expedition to Honduras from 1524 to 1526. Meanwhile, fearing his ambition, the Spanish court had sent officials to Mexico to investigate his acts. In 1528 Cortés was ordered to relinquish the government of Mexico and return to Spain. There he appealed to the king, was made marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca in southern Mexico, and was reappointed captain general. He was not restored, however, to the civil governorship of Mexico. Cortés married the daughter of the count of Aguilar and in 1530 returned to Mexico. There he found himself constantly checked in his activity, his property kept from him, his rights interfered with, and his popularity waning.

In 1536 Cortés discovered the peninsula of Baja California in northwest Mexico, and explored the Pacific coast of Mexico. In 1539 the Spanish explorer Francisco Vásquez de Coronado secured the right to seek the Seven Cities of Cíbola, and in disgust Cortés went back to Spain to complain to the court. Again he was received with honor but could secure no substantial assistance toward recovering his rights or his property. He served as a volunteer in 1541 in the unsuccessful Spanish expedition against Algiers, lost a large part of his remaining fortune, and was shipwrecked. Cortés, neglected by the court after the Algiers expedition, retired to a small estate near Seville, where he lived until his death.

Francisco Pizarro

(1476?-1541), Spanish conqueror and governor of Peru (1532-1541). He was born in Trujillo, Spain. Pizarro was raised in poverty and never learned to read and write. He left Spain for the West Indies in 1502 and lived on the island of Hispaniola. In 1509 he joined Alonso de Ojeda's expedition to Colombia. Serving under Vasco Núñez de Balboa in 1513, he was his chief lieutenant when Balboa sighted the Pacific Ocean and claimed it for Spain. Later Pizarro served in Panama under governor Pedrarias Dávila, who had Pizarro arrest Balboa for treason. Balboa was then tried and quickly executed in January 1519.

In Panama, Pizarro heard tales of a southern land rich in gold. During the 1520s Pizarro led two expeditions down the west coast of South America and saw the golden ornaments worn by Native Americans of

the Inca Empire of Peru. Returning to Spain, he secured the king's permission to conquer the land and become its governor.

Pizarro raised an army and returned to Peru in 1532. Atahualpa, the Inca, or emperor, quickly learned of the Spaniards' arrival but let them pass freely, awaiting them at the inland town of Cajamarca. When Pizarro reached Cajamarca, he invited the Inca and his nobles to a feast in the public square. On November 16, 1532, Atahualpa and thousands of nobles and soldiers came to meet the visitors, whom they called "children of the sun" because they believed they might be gods. Pizarro's troops, who numbered fewer than 200, then rushed forward brandishing their swords. They surrounded the startled and unarmed guests and, with the aid of horses and cannons, cut down almost all the leaders of the empire within half an hour. Atahualpa was captured alive and held for ransom. The emperor offered to fill a large room with gold, and two smaller rooms with silver, in exchange for his release. Pizarro agreed. Couriers came from all parts of the empire to fill the rooms with a treasure worth \$100 million in today's money. After amassing this fortune, Pizarro broke his word and had Atahualpa executed on August 29, 1533.

Pizarro then marched south and took the Inca capital at Cuzco. After looting Cuzco he established the *encomienda*, or forced labor, system over the native people. With most of their leaders dead, they offered only sporadic resistance to Pizarro's rule. Pizarro governed Peru from Lima, which he founded in 1535.

The Spaniards then quarreled among themselves. Diego de Almagro, Pizarro's former partner who had been granted what is now northern Chile, claimed Cuzco and seized it. The power struggle between Pizarro and Almagro led to the War of Las Salinas in 1538. Almagro was killed, but his son, known as Almagro the Lad, continued the war. Pizarro was murdered in his palace in Lima by followers of Almagro in 1541.

Juan Ponce de Leon

(1460-1521), Spanish explorer, born in San Servos, León. In 1493 he accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to America. Later Ponce de León conquered Borinquén (Puerto Rico) for Spain and was governor of the island from 1510 to 1512. From the Native Americans he heard tales of an island called Bimini, located somewhere north of Cuba, which reputedly possessed the fountain of youth, a spring whose waters had the power to restore youth. Believing these tales, Ponce de León in 1512 obtained permission from the Spanish king to find, conquer, and colonize Bimini. The next year Ponce de León sailed from Puerto Rico at the head of an exploratory expedition. On March 27 he sighted the eastern shore of the present state of Florida, which he believed to be the legendary Bimini. He landed north of the site of present-day Saint Augustine on April 2 and named the region Florida because he sighted it on Easter Sunday (Spanish *Pascua Florida*, "flowery Easter"). Believing Florida was an island, he tried to sail around it, going south to what is now Key West, up the west coast of Florida, then south again. He reached Puerto Rico again in September 1513. From 1515 to 1521 he engaged in subduing the rebellious natives of that island. In 1521 he set out to colonize Florida; the expedition included about 200 people and many domestic animals. The party landed on the west coast of Florida, where it was fiercely attacked by Native Americans. Ponce de León was severely wounded in the engagement. The expedition withdrew and sailed to Cuba, where he died shortly after landing.

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca

(1490?-1557?), Spanish explorer, born in Jerez de la Frontera. In 1527 he was appointed treasurer of a royal expedition of about 300 men led by the Spanish soldier Pánfilo de Narváez to conquer and colonize Florida. The expedition sailed into Tampa Bay about April 1528, began an overland march to Apalachee Bay, and then attempted to reach Mexico. During the next two years more than half the men died, and Cabeza de

Vaca emerged as the leader. He led a small band of survivors to an island, possibly Galveston Island, off the southwestern coast of what is now Texas, where the band was captured by Native Americans. Early in 1535, Cabeza de Vaca and the three other survivors of the expedition escaped and began a trek through what are now the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. In 1536 the four men reached a Spanish settlement on the Sinaloa River in Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain in 1537 and was rewarded with an appointment as governor of Río de la Plata (now largely Paraguay).

In 1541-42 Cabeza de Vaca led an expedition 1609 km (1000 mi) through the south of present-day Brazil to Asunción, the capital of Río de la Plata. He took office as governor of the province in 1542 but was ousted two years later as the result of a revolt. Recalled to Spain under arrest in 1554, he was later banished to Africa. In 1556 he obtained a pardon and a pension. His account of the Narváez expedition, *Relación* (1542), and his tales of the Zuñi and their villages, the legendary Seven Cities of Cíbola, encouraged other expeditions to America, notably those of the explorers Hernando de Soto and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado.

Francisco Coronado

(1510-54), Spanish conquistador, first explorer of North America's Southwest, and so-called conqueror of the legendary Seven Cities of Cíbola.

Coronado was born about 1510 in Salamanca. He arrived in New Spain (now Mexico) in 1535 and four years later became governor of the province of Nueva Galicia (largely the modern states of Aguascalientes, Jalisco, and Zacatecas). There he learned of the tales of the Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca about the Seven Cities of Cíbola, believed to be fabulously rich Native American settlements that were to be found northeast of the province. Coronado was chosen to head an overland expedition to explore and conquer the region for Spain.

A fleet commanded by Hernando de Alarcón, in search of an inland waterway to Cíbola, maintained a parallel course along the coast. With about 300 Spanish soldiers and many Native Americans under his command, on February 23, 1540, Coronado left Compostela (now in Nayarit State) and followed the western slope of the Sierra Madre Occidental northward to the present border of the state of Arizona. He then headed northeastward to Cíbola, which he found to be only pueblos of the Zuñi people, containing no wealth. From Cíbola, Coronado dispatched a small party westward under Garcia López de Cárdenas. It was the first band of Europeans to see the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. The entire party wintered near what is now Santa Fe, New Mexico.

In the spring of 1541 the expedition traveled eastward, crossing the upper Río Grande and the Great Plains of what is now northern Texas, where they saw the American bison, or buffalo, and described it for the first time. Turning northward, Coronado crossed the Canadian and Arkansas rivers, seeking a supposedly wealthy kingdom called Quivira, which was actually only a village of the Wichita people in what is now Kansas.

The disappointed expedition returned to New Spain in 1542 and was coolly received by the authorities. In 1544 Coronado was relieved as governor, and thereafter he lived quietly in Mexico City, where he died on September 22, 1554. The account of his explorations, valued for the unique description of the southwestern United States before the European conquest, was published in the 14th report (1896) of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology. In 1952 the Coronado National Memorial commemorating the expedition was established near Bisbee, Arizona.

Hernando De Soto

(1500?-1542?), Spanish explorer who explored much of the state of Florida. De Soto was born in Barcarrota, Spain. In 1514 he went to Darien, in present-day Panama, as an aide to the governor, and between 1519 and 1530, he explored Central America.

In 1530 he joined another adventurer, Francisco Pizarro, in the conquest of the Inca Empire in Peru. He was the first European to meet the ruler, Inca Atahualpa, whom Pizarro had imprisoned and then executed. De Soto deplored Pizarro's cruelty but still accepted his share of the Inca treasure. He returned to Spain in 1536 with a fortune in gold.

In 1537 Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who was also king of Spain, named de Soto governor of Cuba and Florida. This was a meaningless title unless de Soto could colonize part of the largely unknown land of Florida. He had authority to explore and conquer it for Spain. He expected it to be rich in gold and other minerals, perhaps as rich as Peru.

In May 1539 de Soto sailed from Havana, Cuba, for Florida with a force of about 600. They landed near Tampa Bay and marched north along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. For four years, de Soto and his soldiers explored some 906,000 sq km (350,000 sq mi) in what is now the southeastern United States of America. They went as far west as Texas and as far north as the northern boundary of Arkansas. In May 1541 they became the first Europeans to see the Mississippi River, probably near the site of Memphis, Tennessee.

De Soto made enemies of the indigenous people by seizing grain, burning villages, and enslaving villagers. The cost was high, as many of de Soto's soldiers were lost in battles and ambushes. The army spent the winter of 1541 to 1542 near the junction of the Canadian and Arkansas rivers in Oklahoma. In the spring they returned to the Mississippi, where de Soto died of a fever on May 21. His aide, Luis de Moscoso, sank de Soto's body in the river to keep his death a secret. Moscoso did not want the local people to find out that de Soto was not immortal, as he had claimed to be. He may also have been afraid of retaliation by the townspeople of nearby Anilco, where de Soto had ordered a massacre from his deathbed.

Moscoso and his soldiers built barges and sailed down the river to the Gulf of Mexico, then southwest along the coast until they reached Pánuco, Mexico, in September 1543. Only about half of the expedition survived. They had found no gold or treasure except a chest of poor-quality pearls, and even that they lost. They left behind them many dead comrades and some deserters. More important, they left behind European diseases that were new to the western hemisphere and killed many of the indigenous people, who lacked resistance to them.

The De Soto National Memorial, established in 1948 near Saint Petersburg, commemorates the explorer's landing in Florida.

John Cabot

(1450?-1499), Italian navigator and explorer, who attempted to find a direct route to Asia. Although Cabot was probably born in Genoa, as a youth he moved to Venice, where his seafaring career probably began. He became a naturalized Venetian in 1476, but about eight years later settled in Bristol, England. Cabot had developed a theory that Asia might be reached by sailing westward. This theory appealed to several wealthy merchants of Bristol, who agreed to give him financial support. In 1493, when reports reached England that Christopher Columbus had made the westward passage to Asia, Cabot and his supporters began to make plans for a more direct crossing to the Orient. The proposed expedition was authorized on March 5, 1496, by King Henry VII of England.

With a crew of 18 men, Cabot sailed from Bristol on May 2, 1497, on the Matthew. He steered a generally northwestward course, and on June 24, after a rough voyage, he landed, perhaps on present-day Cape Breton Island; he subsequently sailed along the Labrador, Newfoundland, and New England coasts. Believing that he had reached northeastern Asia, he formally claimed the region for Henry VII. Cabot returned to England

in August and was granted a pension. Assured of royal support, he immediately planned a second exploratory voyage that he hoped would bring him to Cipangu (Japan). The expedition, consisting of four or five ships and 300 men, left Bristol in May 1498. The fate of this expedition is uncertain. It is believed that in June, Cabot reached the eastern coast of Greenland and sailed northward along the coast until his crews mutinied because of the severe cold and forced him to turn southward. He may have cruised along the coast of North America to Chesapeake Bay at latitude 38° North. He was forced to return to England because of a lack of supplies, and he died soon afterward.

Henry Hudson

(?-1611?), English navigator, famous for four great voyages of discovery; a river and a bay in North America are named for him. Nothing is known of Hudson's life before 1607, the year in which he undertook his first expedition for the English Muscovy Company. Commanding a single ship, the Hopewell, Hudson touched the shores of Greenland and the Svalbard islands, and sailed as far north as 80°23' in an attempt to find a northeast passage by way of the Arctic Ocean to East Asia. During the following year he sailed in the same ship under the auspices of the same company, and again attempted unsuccessfully to find a passage, this time by way of the islands of Novaya Zemlya in the Barents Sea. Upon his return, the Muscovy Co. withdrew their support, and Hudson turned to the Dutch East India Co. for new funds and a ship to carry on his work. In that company's employ he sailed from the Dutch island of Texel, on his third voyage in 1609, in the Half Moon, a vessel of about 73 metric tons, with a mixed Dutch and English crew of 18 or 20 men. He again began his exploration off Novaya Zemlya, intending to try a passage through the ice, but his crew, having endured extremely cold and harsh weather, mutinied, and Hudson headed west and south past Nova Scotia and down the North American coast, in the belief that the Atlantic Ocean was separated from the Pacific Ocean only by a narrow isthmus. In September 1609 he first entered New York Bay, and he spent the following month exploring the Hudson River to a point about 240 km (about 150 mi) from its mouth, at about the present site of the city of Albany. Before the end of the year Hudson and his men returned to England, where they and their ship were seized by the government. Hudson was commanded from that time on to serve only the country of his birth.

In 1610 Hudson set out on his final voyage under the patronage of a newly formed company of English gentlemen. In his new ship, the Discovery, he decided from the start to search for a northwest passage; he reached the Hudson Strait by the middle of the year, and passed into Hudson Bay beyond it, where he spent three months exploring the eastern islands and shores. By November his ship was frozen in, and a winter of extreme privation and cold led to dissension among the crew. A part of the crew mutinied in June 1611 and put Hudson, his son, and seven others of the company adrift in a small boat. A few survivors from the mutinous crew reached England, where they were imprisoned, but Hudson and the others were never seen again.

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