

Christopher Columbus (Italian)

European country financing his exploration: Spain

Years exploring: 1492, 1493, 1498, 1502

Route: to the Americas

Important Facts:

1. Looking for a direct route to Asia and accidentally stumbled upon the Americas
2. Ignited a mass exploration of the New World

Jacques Cartier (French)

European country financing his exploration: France

Years exploring: 1534-1542

Route: Landed in North America near Newfoundland

Important Facts:

1. First European to travel inland in North America
2. Claimed what is now known as Canada for France

Amerigo Vespucci (Italian)

European country financing his exploration: Spain

Years exploring: 1497-1504

Route: Landed in the Americas

Important Facts:

1. Realized the Americas were an entirely different land mass from Asia
2. America is named after him

Leif Erikson (Iceland Viking)

Year exploring: 1000

Route: Landed in the Americas

Important Facts:

1. Explored North America first (Greenland aka Vinland)
2. Often gets no credit for discovering North America first

Giovanni da Verrazano (Italian)

European country financing his exploration: Italy

Years exploring: 1522-1528

Route: Landed on the East Coast of North America

Important Facts:

1. Explored the Atlantic Coast of North America from Florida to New Brunswick including the New York Bay, the Carolinas and the Narragansett Bay

Henry Hudson (English)

European country financing his exploration: England

Years exploring: 1607-1611

Route: Landed in Greenland

Important Facts:

1. Was trying to find a western route to Asia
2. Had a major river and bay named after him

Hernando de Soto (Spanish)

European country financing his exploration: Spain

Years exploring: 1539-1541

Route: Landed in the Tampa Bay (present day Florida)

Important Facts:

1. Led the first European expedition deep into modern US (FL, GA, NC, AL, AK)
2. First documented European to cross the Mississippi River

Juan Pardo (Spanish)

European country financing his exploration: Spain

Years exploring: 1566-1568

Route: Landed on the Southeast Coast of North America

Important Facts:

1. Led the Spanish expedition of what is now North and South Carolina
2. Founded the first European Settlement in the interior of North Carolina (1567)