

Volume 5

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

The Story of America

Contributor to Volume 5

Christopher Zehnder

General Editor

Rollin A. Lasseter

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Chapter 1 A New World

A Saintly Explorer

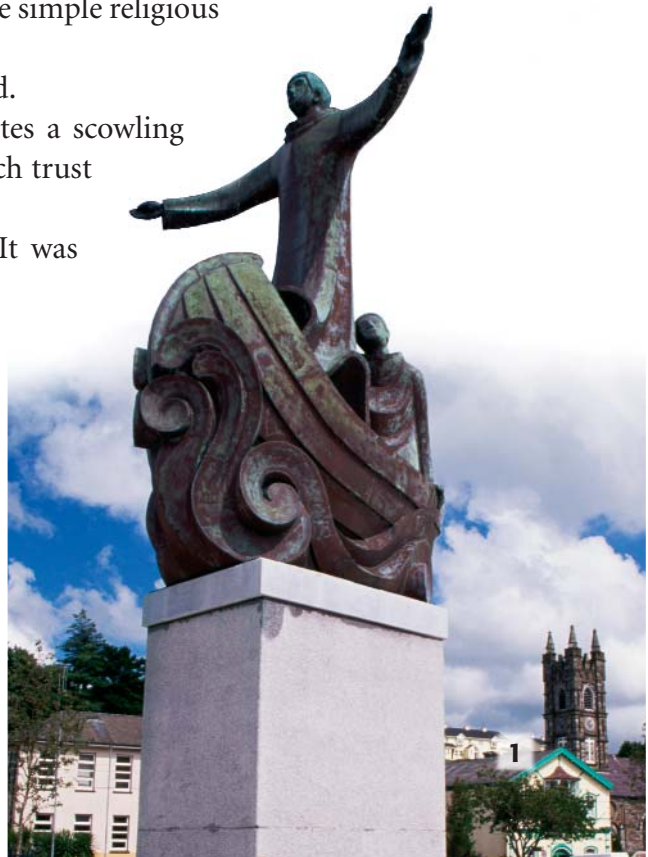
“What are the three things God loves, Mother?” the young boy asked. “Child,” the holy nun replied, “God loves the true faith that comes from a pure heart. He loves the simple religious life and the generous kindness of Christian love.”

“And what does God hate?” the child then asked.

“Three things He hates,” she replied. “God hates a scowling face. He hates stubborn wrongdoing, and too much trust in money.”

Thus, St. Ita taught the young boy, Brendan. It was a lesson he learned well. So great was his faith that he took on the religious life of a monk. Though he lived in poverty, Brendan was joyful. He loved neither riches, nor comforts. He lived a life of penance, and what little he had, he generously shared with the poor. When the good Bishop Erc ordained him a priest, Brendan took on a most heroic task: he left his homeland and friends and traveled to foreign lands to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Statue of St. Brendan



Brendan lived in fifth-century Ireland. It was a dangerous time. Small kings and chieftains continually waged wars against each other. Bandits infested the roads and highways, and pirates terrorized those who sailed on the seas. Most of Europe was still not Christian, and pagan warriors had no respect for priests or monks or nuns. A small band of monks, traveling by land or water, could be enslaved or even killed. Nature, too, posed many threats. Small boats could be wrecked in rough seas; violent weather and wild beasts endangered those who traveled over land. Brendan was not daunted by such dangers. Instead, he listened to the promise of Our Lord: “Every one that hath forsaken father or mother or sister or lands for my sake shall receive a hundredfold in the present and shall possess everlasting life.”

Emboldened by this promise, Brendan built himself a boat. This boat was unlike any most of us are used to seeing. It was, of course, not built of steel, nor even of wood planks. It was a **coracle**, a small vessel used by Irish fishermen. It looked rather like a bowl or an upside-down umbrella. To build it, Brendan constructed a wood frame, over which he stretched tanned oxen hides. To keep the water from soaking through the hides, he smeared them with animal fat.

Taking with him a handful of monks, Brendan set sail for the “Land of Promise of the Saints.” This land, which lay westward across the ocean, was said to be most beautiful. There, tall, stately trees rose majestically toward heaven, and rich grasses grew by streams of clear, sweet water. To reach this Land of Promise, though, Brendan and his monks had to pass through many dangers and many strange lands. Sometimes they came across other monks on distant sea islands, for Irish monks had long been sailing west to found new monasteries. Eventually, though, Brendan and his monks would arrive in lands that had never before seen European men.

coracle: a small boat used by Irish fishermen, made of hides stretched over a wooden frame

This old illustration shows a sea monster attacking a ship.



Did Brendan Really Land in America?

Many people have long doubted the story of St. Brendan's voyage. Not only have they questioned the many fabulous occurrences recorded about the voyage, but they could not believe that a coracle could sail across the stormy Atlantic Ocean. However, in 1976, a British navigation scholar named Tim Severin proved that a coracle could sail from Ireland to North America by making the journey himself! He also showed that St. Brendan's giant crystals, the island of birds, and even the friendly whales could have a basis in everyday facts.

In a coracle built according to the description of Brendan's boat, Severin set sail from Ireland. The coracle followed the ocean currents that flowed northward and westward along the coast of Scotland. North of Scotland, Severin reached the Faroe Islands, where, on one island, he saw hundreds of sea birds. Could this have been the "Paradise of Birds"? Severin also noted that the word *Faroe* means "island of sheep." The ocean current took Severin farther westward in a great half-circle, until he reached Iceland. There, like Brendan, he spent the winter. Iceland is known for its volcanoes.

Could this have been the origin of the "flaming, foul smelling rocks" cast by the inhabitants of an island Brendan passed on his voyage? Severin also noted that the whales he found at sea were quite friendly. They would sometimes swim around the coracle, even swim under the boat and gently bump it from below.

Severin landed on Newfoundland in North America on June 26, 1977. Following the ocean currents, the journey had taken Severin only a few months. To return to Ireland, though, would take far longer, because the coracle would have to go against the currents. St. Brendan might possibly have followed the current as far south as Virginia; on his return to Ireland he would then have had to fight the currents for an even longer distance. This could explain why the legends say St. Brendan's voyage lasted seven years.



Many are the wonders told of Brendan's voyage. Not far north of the northern tip of Scotland, the monks came to a group of islands. Brendan called these islands the Paradise of Birds, because he found so many white seabirds there. The largest of the islands held such a great a number of sheep that the monks called it the Island of Sheep. Sailing farther north and west, the monks, so says the legend, "passed by crystals that rose up to the sky." Soon they reached an island whose inhabitants pelted them "with flaming, foul smelling rocks."

While at sea, on the feast of St. Paul the Apostle (June 30), Brendan's companions grew fearful; Brendan was chanting the prayers for that feast so loudly, they said, that he would wake the dangerous sea monsters. Brendan laughed at their fears. "Where is your faith?" he asked his companions. "Fear nothing but Our Lord, and love him with fear." Brendan then said Mass with great reverence. While he sang the Mass prayers, lo! sea monsters rose from the depths, and began playing merrily around the boat. Thus they frolicked until nightfall, when Brendan ended the prayers for the feast. The monsters then sank again into the salty depths of the sea.

Yet another story is told of Brendan's voyage. As Easter was approaching, his monks told Brendan that he should find land where they might celebrate the holy feast. "Brothers," said Brendan, "Our Lord can give us land anywhere he wishes." On Easter day, God, indeed, gave the brothers land: a great white sea monster rose from the depths and made an island of his back. There the brothers celebrated Easter for one day and two nights. Finally, Brendan and his monks reached the Land of Promise, where they remained for a time and then returned to Ireland.

Brendan's voyage to and from the Land of Promise lasted seven years. It is said that the holy man lost no one from his crew, nor did any suffer from hunger or thirst during the long voyage. Returning to Ireland, Brendan founded more monasteries and built churches. He died at the monastery he founded at Clonfert on May 16, the day kept as his feast.

Viking Explorers Discover a New World

Eric the Red

Winter was bitterly cold in Greenland. In the Viking farmsteads that dotted the coast of this Arctic wilderness, families gathered for warmth around great fires built in the middle of their long houses. Viking houses were unlike our own. The entire family lived in one long hall, or main room. They had no bedrooms, but slept on an earthen ledge along the walls; some slept in small boxes like closets. On a large stone called the “hearth,” the great fire burned; its smoke rose upward and escaped through a round hole cut in the roof. Sometimes, when the wind blew through the hole, smoke filled the long house, stinging the eyes of those who lived there. The only light came from the fire, and from torches placed along walls. The flickering flames cast a dim, moving light over the faces and forms of the family members.

Like other families, Eric the Red (so called because of his fiery red hair), his wife, Thjodhild (pronounced THYOHD•hild), and their children spent the evenings before going to sleep listening to stories. These stories, called **sagas**, told of great Viking heroes and their deeds, of Viking families and their adventures. Sometimes, they listened to stories told by travelers who had crossed to **Greenland** over the cold seas that separated Greenland from other Viking lands in Norway, Scotland, and Iceland. The Vikings were great sailors; in long, curved boats with figures of dragons’ heads on their prows, they crossed many oceans and sailed up many great rivers. Vikings had settled such faraway lands as Russia and northern France, and had even crossed into the Mediterranean Sea. The Vikings were pagans who conquered and terrorized Christian settlements



sagas: the heroic tales told by the Vikings

Greenland: an icy island discovered by Eric the Red and settled by Vikings; it lies between Iceland and Canada.

throughout Europe. Some Vikings went into battle without armor, even without shirts! These warriors were called “berserkers,” which meant “bare-chested ones.”

On one such winter night, Eric the Red and his family perhaps heard the story told by Bjarni Herjolfsson (BYAR•nee HAIR•yohlf•son), or Bjarni, the son of Herjolf. Bjarni told how his ship had been blown off course on a journey from Iceland to Greenland. Pushed across the waves far to the west, Bjarni had seen a new land unknown to the Vikings. The tale of this new land awakened Eric’s interest; here was a country to be discovered and, perhaps, settled.

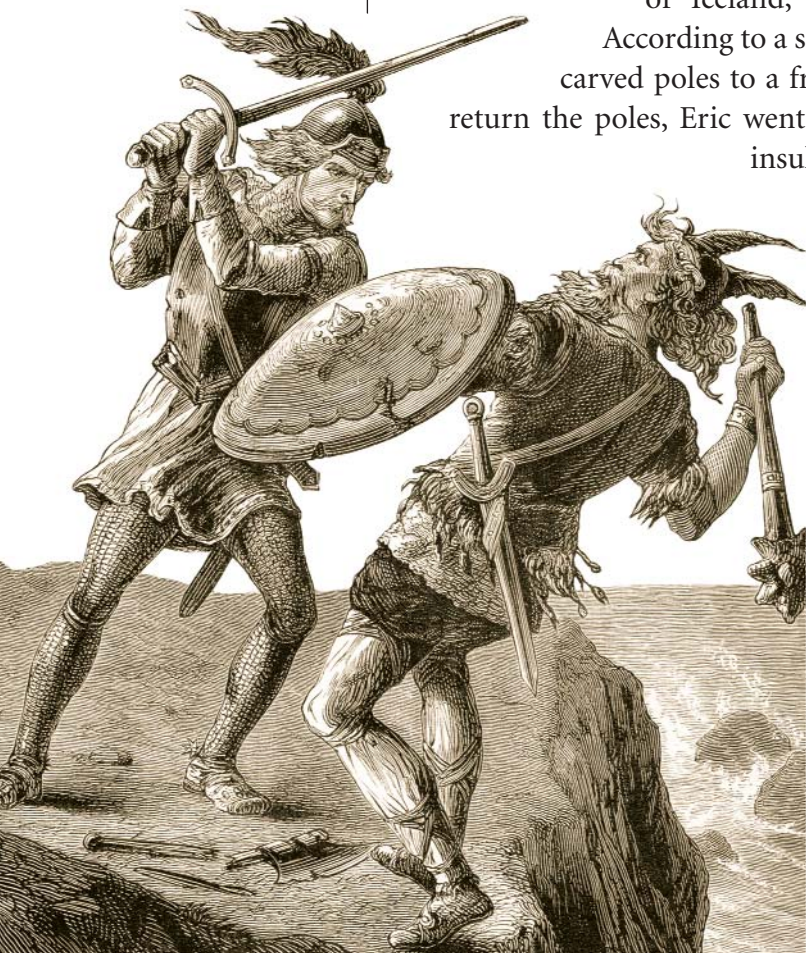
Eric the Red had, himself, been a discoverer. Eric’s father had fled from Norway to Iceland after he had killed a man. Raised in Iceland, Eric became a great seafarer and had a farm in the western part of Iceland, at Breydafjord (BRY•dah•fyohrd).

According to a saga written about him, Eric lent two carved poles to a friend. When the friend neglected to return the poles, Eric went to his house and took them. This insulted his friend, and he sent two of

his sons to attack Eric. Eric fought with the two young men and killed them; for this the court of Iceland, called the *Thing*, declared Eric an “outlaw,” and told him to leave Iceland for three years. If Eric remained in Iceland, any of the young men’s relatives had the right to kill him.

Eric left Iceland and set sail for the north and west. There he discovered the cold shores of a land before unknown to the Vikings. For three years he sailed along the eastern and western coasts of this

A Viking battle



land and found the dwellings of an unknown people. These people, he discovered, paddled the sea waters in boats made from stretching animal skins over wooden frames and used tools made from stones. When the three years of his exile were over, Eric returned to Iceland and told the people there of this new land. Though it was colder and more barren than Iceland, Eric called the new land “Greenland” in order to attract settlers.

Many Icelanders decided they would move to Greenland. Around the year 985 or 986, about 25 ships filled with colonists left Iceland for Greenland. Only about 14 ships survived the ocean crossing. The survivors settled along the eastern and western coasts of Greenland, where they established farms and raised grain, cattle, hogs, and sheep. They also lived by hunting large, wild animals, such as bear and caribou. Eric the Red moved his family to Greenland and set up his farmstead on the eastern coast.

So it was that Bjarni Herjolfsson’s story about a new land farther west than Greenland piqued Eric’s interest. He could not go to sea himself, so he decided to send his son, Leif (LIFE). Leif Ericsson was known far and wide as a masterful seaman.

Leif the Lucky

A saga says that Leif Ericsson was “a big, strapping fellow, handsome to look at, thoughtful and temperate in all things, as well as highly respected.” No one knows where he was born, but Leif grew up on his father’s farm in Greenland. There he learned the art of sailing from his father, from whom he also inherited the desire to find new lands.

While still a young man, Leif set out on the long voyage to Norway. Such a voyage was common to young Viking men, who were ambitious to serve great kings and lords. Leif arrived at the court of Norway’s king, Olaf Tryggvason (Trig•VAH•son). King Olaf, the first Norse king to become a Christian, was working to convert his people to the Christian faith. Spending the winter of the year

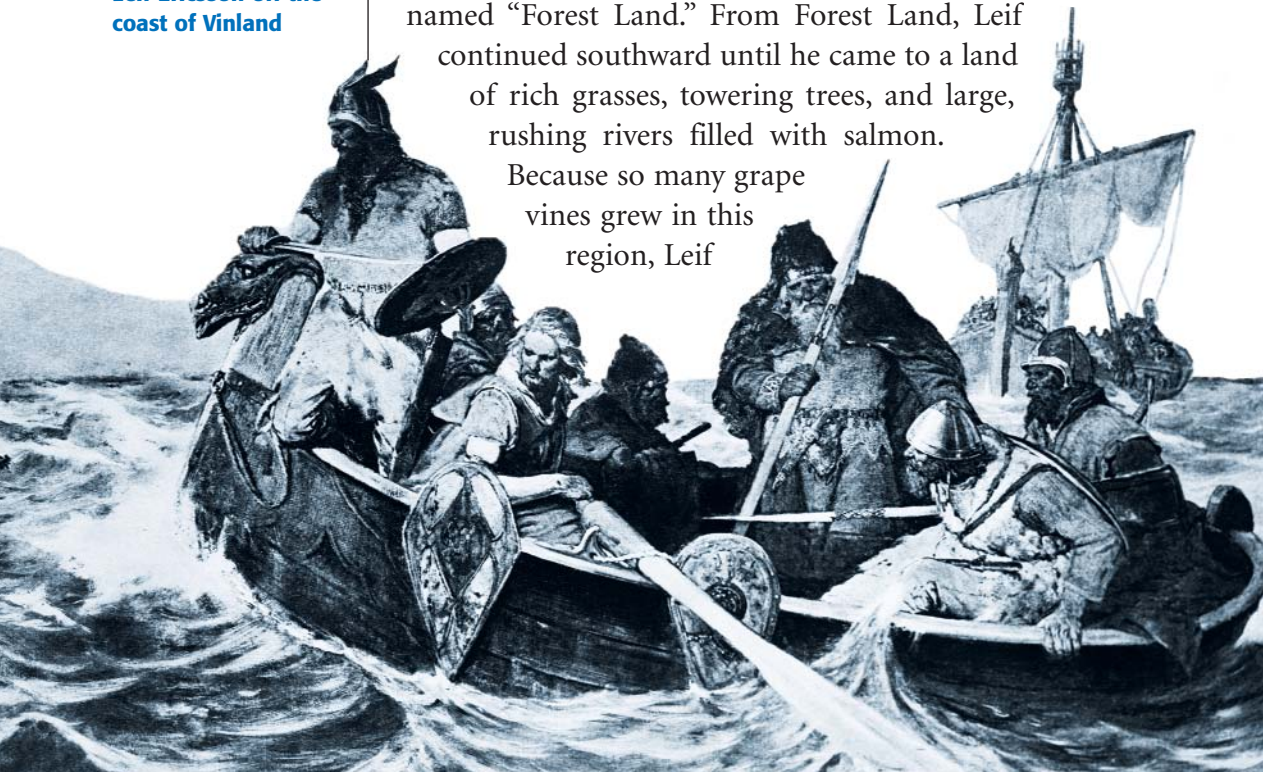
999–1000 at King Olaf’s court, Leif himself became a Christian. When Olaf asked him to return to Greenland to convert the Vikings there to the Faith, Leif joyfully agreed. In the spring, Leif set sail for home, accompanied by a priest. Olaf sent two other priests to Iceland, to preach the Gospel there.

Leif and the priest were successful in bringing many Greenlanders into the Church. Thjodhild, Leif’s mother, gladly accepted the Faith, though his father, Eric, clung to the old Norse religion that worshipped the one-eyed god, Odin, and the god Thor, who with his giant hammer rocked the skies with thunder. Thjodhild built a small church some distance from their farmstead where she and other Christians could come to worship Christ and receive the sacraments.

Thus, perhaps to found a Christian settlement, Leif set sail to see if he could find Bjarni Herjolfsson’s land in the west. The first land he reached was not very encouraging. It was flat and stony, and Leif named it “Flat-Stone Land.” This land was probably Baffin Island. Sailing southward, Leif came upon a level country, densely covered with forests. This country, which was probably part of Labrador, he named “Forest Land.” From Forest Land, Leif continued southward until he came to a land of rich grasses, towering trees, and large, rushing rivers filled with salmon.

Because so many grape vines grew in this region, Leif

Leif Ericsson off the coast of Vinland



named it **Vinland**, or “Wine Land.” He and his men built several stone houses near the seashore and then returned home.

It is thought that Vinland is on the northern tip of Newfoundland. There, hundreds of years later, archaeologists discovered the ruins of stone houses built by Vikings. The sagas, though, seem to say that Leif went even farther south and landed on what is today Prince Edward Island. The news of this new land, of its fertile soil and abundant timber and water, was welcome to the people of frozen, barren Greenland. It was not long before a small group of adventurers formed to try their hand at settling the new country.

Vinland: the place of Viking settlements on Newfoundland in Canada, or on Prince Edward Island, farther south

Vikings Settle Vinland

Thorfinn Karlsefni (THOR•fin•Karl•SEF•nee) was the first Viking to attempt to settle Vinland. Receiving Leif’s permission to use the houses he had constructed in Vinland, Thorfinn set sail. With him went 160 men and 5 women. The adventurers clearly wanted to form a permanent settlement because they brought livestock with them.

Thorfinn followed the same route as Eric, landing first at Flat-Stone Land, then at Forest Land. Farther south he came upon a large bay, which could have been the Bay of Fundy. Sailing even farther south, the Vikings discovered a large river with an island at its mouth. There they built their settlement.

Thorfinn and the settlers discovered that this land was already inhabited by people, whom they named **Skraelings** (SKRAY•leengs). This was the same name the Vikings gave to the native inhabitants they had found in Greenland (Inuits and Eskimos). Thorfinn tried to be friendly with these people and began trading with them. At



Skraelings: the Viking name for the natives of Vinland and of Greenland

**The lands discovered
by St. Brendan and
the Vikings**



first the Skraelings and the Vikings lived at peace with one another, and Thorfinn baptized two Skraeling boys from Forest Land. The Vikings settled down to raise their cattle and to trade with the natives. During the first autumn, Thorfinn's wife, Gudrid, gave birth to a son, whom they named Snorri. He was the first European born in North America.

But the Vikings and the Skraelings did not long remain at peace. War broke out between them, and though the Vikings were brave, stout fighters, the Skraelings far outnumbered them. Thorfinn realized that if he stayed in Vinland he would always be at war, and so after about three years he and his people decided to return to Greenland.

During the next twenty years or so, the Vikings made three more attempts to settle Vinland. All were failures. In 1121, a bishop from Greenland named Eirik Gnupsson (EYE•rik GNOOP•son) set sail to bring the Gospel to Vinland. Nothing is known of his voyage, nor do we know if he ever returned to his people.

White Indians

It is said that about 50 years after Bishop Eirik Gñupsson set sail for Vinland, another brave seafarer crossed the Atlantic to find a new world.

There was a king in Wales named Owain Gwynedd (GWIN •ed), who had 17 sons and two daughters. When King Owain died in 1170, his sons could not agree which one of them should be king. War broke out among the brothers. So sad and miserable a place did Wales become that one of King Owain's sons, named Madoc, decided he would set sail across the ocean to find a new home. This home, he hoped, would be free of all war.

According to tales told many years after the voyage, Madoc crossed the Atlantic Ocean into what is now the Gulf of Mexico. Sailing along the coast of present-day Florida and Alabama, Madoc found a great bay. So warm was the air, and so green and fair were the lands around the bay that Madoc decided he had found the land he had been searching for. He returned to Wales and told of the new land across the sea. Many who were as tired of war as Madoc decided to brave the great ocean with him. After bringing the first group of Welsh settlers to his new land, Madoc returned to Wales for more settlers. Again Madoc crossed the ocean, never again to return to Wales.

This is all that European writers tell of Madoc and his Welsh settlers. What happened to them? Were they killed by Indians? Did they eventually return to Wales? No one knows. Many historians doubt that Madoc's voyage to the new world ever happened. It is *just legend*, they say. Yet, if you were to follow the Alabama River, which flows into Mobile Bay in Alabama, you would find along its banks the ruins of an old fortress that some say the Indians could not have built. In fact, the fortress looks very much like castles found in Wales. Another such fortress can be found at Fort Mountain in Georgia, and a third (with a moat around it) near Manchester, Tennessee. Some people claim to have found Welsh helmets and

Mandan Indian chief



Mandan Indian boats



armor, as well as Roman coins, in Kentucky and Ohio. Were these things left by Madoc's people?

In a letter he wrote in 1810, John Sevier, then governor of Tennessee, perhaps sheds more light on the fate of Madoc and the Welsh. Governor Sevier wrote that, in 1782, a Cherokee Indian chief named Oconostota told him that "white people" had built the fortresses in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Asked what these white people were called, Oconostota said his grandfather and father had called them "Welsh."

What had happened to these "Welsh"? Oconostota told Governor Sevier that Indian enemies had forced the Welsh to abandon their first fortress at Lookout Mountain in Tennessee. Going up the Coosa River, the Welsh next settled in Georgia, building a fortress atop the 3,000-foot Fort Mountain. Once again the Indians forced them to move on, and the Welsh stayed for a time in the area of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

For many years, said Oconostota, his people, the Cherokee, fought with the Welsh. Finally, the Welsh made peace with the Cherokee and agreed to leave the Duck River area. According to the chief, the Welsh followed the Tennessee River to the Ohio, and floated down the Ohio to the Mississippi. When they reached the Missouri River, which flows into the Mississippi, Oconostota said the Welsh followed that muddy water into the west. What happened to them after that? "They are no more white people," said the chief. "They are now all become Indians, and look like other red people of the country."

In the 1700s and into the early 1800s, French, English, and American explorers told of an Indian tribe called the **Mandans**, many of whom looked more like Europeans than Indians. The Mandan language, some said, was similar to Welsh; at least many of its words were very close to Welsh words. The Mandans' boats, too, were similar to Welsh boats. They looked like teacups without handles! And Mandan villages had streets and squares, much like European vil-

Mandans: members of a Dakota Indian tribe, said to have resembled Europeans in their looks, language, and ways

lages. Are these stories true? Were the Mandans descended from Madoc's Welsh? Unfortunately, we shall never know for sure, because in the early 1800s, a disease called smallpox killed off most of the Mandan tribe.

Admiral of the Ocean Sea

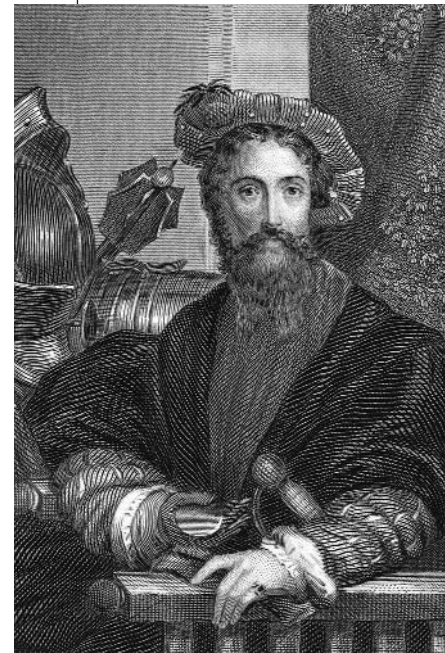
Westward, across the Sea

If Madoc sailed to America, few remembered his voyage. The story of Leif Ericsson and Vinland was little known outside Iceland and Scandinavia. All of Europe, though, knew the legend of St. Brendan, and none knew it better than the Portuguese. In the early 1400s, Prince Henry the Navigator, the son of the king of Portugal, had sent ships westward into the Atlantic Ocean to discover where "St. Brendan's Isles" lay. Though on these voyages the Portuguese discovered the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, they were not satisfied. St. Brendan's Isles, they believed, lay farther west.

One young man named Christopher Columbus heard all the stories about St. Brendan's Isles and believed them. A seafarer had told Columbus about three islands he had sighted far out in the Atlantic Ocean. These surely must be St. Brendan's Isles, Columbus thought. Columbus was very interested in news of islands that lay westward across the sea, for he had a great dream. He wanted to prove that he could reach the rich lands of India and China by sailing directly west across the sea.

Columbus was not from Portugal, but from the seafaring city of Genoa in Italy. Columbus went to sea when he was a young man and sailed throughout the Mediterranean. In 1476, he was shipwrecked off the coast of Portugal. After being rescued, he decided to remain in that country. In those days, Portugal was the best place for a sailor to live. Aboard Portuguese ships, Columbus sailed to the Canary Islands, the Azores, and the Cape

Christopher Columbus





The port of Lisbon in Portugal

Christopher: name that means “bearer of Christ”

Verde Islands, and even voyaged as far north as England and Iceland. As a Portuguese sailor, Columbus learned how to sail on the rough and tempest-tossed Atlantic.

Doubtless, after so many voyages, Columbus thought he was well prepared to take on the quest of sailing westward across the “Ocean Sea” (as men then called the Atlantic) to the far-off “Indies.” Columbus knew that great riches were in store for anyone who found such a route, for the Indies held spices, silks, and perhaps even gold!

Yet Columbus was not thinking just of riches in making his plan. A devout Catholic, Columbus believed God had chosen him to bring the Gospel of Christ to unbelievers overseas. After all, his name was **Christopher**, which means “bearer of Christ.” He also hoped that riches obtained from the Indies could be used to fund a crusade to retake Jerusalem from the Muslims.

Columbus first offered his plan to King John II of Portugal. Would his majesty be interested in funding such an expedition? The king was indeed interested, but said no. For three years Columbus hoped the king would change his mind, but he never did. In 1488, a Portuguese captain named Bartolomeu Dias found a route to the Indies. He did so not by sailing west, as Columbus proposed, but by sailing south. Dias sailed along the coast of Africa until he came to the tip of Africa, called the Cape of Good Hope. With good hope, Dias then sailed eastward across the Indian Ocean, and so reached India.

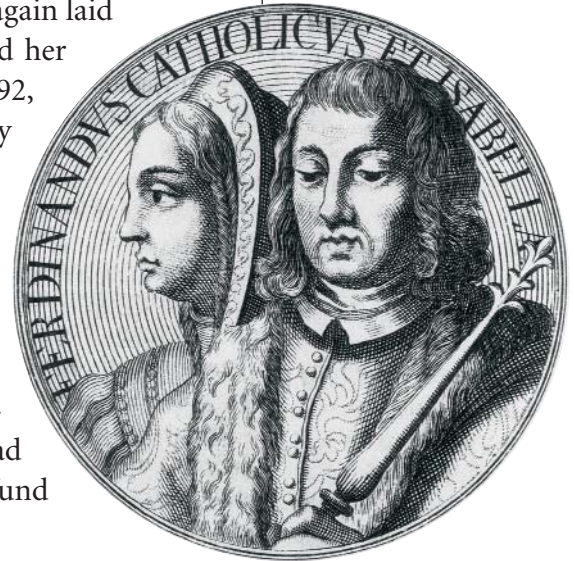
Unable to interest the king of Portugal in his quest, Columbus turned to Spain. He laid out his plan to Queen Isabella, who said she would have a group of scholars study it. But finding a route to the Indies was the least of Isabella’s concerns. She and her husband, King Ferdinand, were busy fighting a war with Granada, a Muslim kingdom that controlled the southern tip of Spain. For the next several years, the “Catholic Monarchs” (as Ferdinand and Isabella were

called) said nothing to Columbus about his plan. Then, in 1491, after five years of waiting, Columbus received word that Isabella's scholars had rejected his plan!

If it had not been for an old friend, a Franciscan priest named Father Juan Perez (HWAHN•PAIR•ez), Columbus would have left Spain then and there. Father Juan asked Isabella to meet again with Columbus, and the queen agreed. Columbus once again laid out his plan to Isabella, and the queen again asked her scholars what they thought of it. On January 2, 1492, Columbus heard from the Catholic Monarchs. They again refused to fund his expedition!

After this second rejection, Columbus packed his bags, saddled his mule, and set off for the city of Cordova. From there he would set off for France. Perhaps the French king would take an interest in his plan, he thought. He had traveled only about four miles when he was met by a messenger from the queen. Isabella, he learned, had changed her mind; she and Ferdinand would fund Columbus's expedition to the Indies.

Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain



Voyage into Unknown Waters

It took some courage for sailors to set off westward across the Ocean Sea. In those days, few sailors had ventured far out to sea, but had always kept close to the coast. Sailors did not fear sailing off the end of the world, for most people knew the Earth was round like a ball. They did fear that they might sail so far out to sea that the winds that blew them west would not blow them back home again. And who knew how far the Indies really were? What if they sailed and sailed, and found no land? This, indeed, was a frightening thought! They might end up stranded in the middle of the ocean, where they would run out of food and fresh water, and so would die a slow and painful death.

Santa Maria: Spanish for “Saint Mary.” Columbus’s flagship was named for the Mother of God.

Columbus and his crew set sail from Spain on August 3, 1492, in three small ships. Columbus’s “flagship,” the ***Santa Maria*** (SAN•tah Mah•REE•ah), was a small vessel; the other two ships, the *Niña* (NEE•nyah) and the *Pinta* (PEEN•tah), were even smaller. In these small craft the sailors were to brave the great and violent Atlantic Ocean.

The vast Ocean Sea was a wondrous place. Needless to say, the sailors kept a weather eye out for the sea monsters, about which many stories had been told. Whether they saw any, nobody can say. In late September, the three small ships moved through a sea covered with a carpet of seaweed. Then, for several days, no wind blew. The sea below them was like glass. Only the swimming sailors caused ripples to disturb the water.

Every day the men on Columbus’s ships would greet the morning with prayer. At daybreak, a sailor would sing this song to waken his mates:

Replicas of Columbus’s three sailing ships: the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*



<i>Bendita sea la luz</i>	Blessed be the light
<i>y la Santa Veracruz</i>	And the Holy Cross;
<i>y el Señor de la Verdad</i>	And the Lord of Truth
<i>y la Santa Trinidad;</i>	And the Holy Trinity;
<i>bendita sea el alma,</i>	blessed be the soul,
<i>y el Señor que nos la manda.</i>	and the Lord who guides it.
<i>Bendito sea el día</i>	Blessed be the day
<i>y el Señor que nos lo envía.</i>	And the Lord who sends it to us.

But the evening song was reserved for Blessed Mary Virgin. It was the ancient and beautiful “Salve Regina.”

<i>Salve Regina,</i>	Hail Holy Queen,
<i>Mater Misericordiae,</i>	Mother of Mercy,
<i>vita, dulcedo, et spes</i>	Hail, our life, our sweetness, and
<i>nostra, salve.</i>	our hope.
<i>Ad te clamamus, exsules</i>	To thee do we cry, poor banished
<i>fili Euae.</i>	children of Eve.
<i>Ad te suspiramus,</i>	To thee do we send up our sighs,
<i>gementes et flentes</i>	mourning and weeping
<i>in hac lacrimarum valle.</i>	in this valley of tears.
<i>Eia ergo, advocata nostra,</i>	Turn then, most gracious advocate,
<i>illos tuos misericordes oculos</i>	thine eyes of mercy
<i>ad nos converte.</i>	toward us.
<i>Et Jesum, benedictum</i>	And after this our exile,
<i>fructum ventris tui,</i>	show unto us the blessed
<i>nobis post hoc exilium ostende.</i>	fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
<i>O clemens, O pia, O dulcis</i>	O clement, O loving, O sweet
<i>Virgo Maria.</i>	Virgin Mary.

By the end of September, Columbus’s sailors were getting restless and fearful. They had sailed far into the west, but saw no land. What if the Indies were farther away than Columbus thought? What if the ships became stranded in the middle of the sea and could not return to Spain? On September 25 the captain of the *Pinta* cried out that he saw land; but neither the next day, nor the next, did any land appear. Five days passed,

**Columbus claims
San Salvador for the
Church and Spain.**



San Salvador:

Spanish for the “Holy Savior,” Our Lord Jesus Christ

and still no land. On October 10 the crew threatened to mutiny, and Columbus had to promise that if they discovered no land in three days, they would return to Spain.

One day passed, and then another. No land appeared. But on the third day, long before sunrise, Columbus heard the cry that he had so long hoped for. “Land! Land!” cried the sailor on watch. Dawn came; then the sun rose. In the full light of day, across the blue-green water, the sailors could see an island! They had reached land, indeed! That day, October 12, 1492, Columbus and his men rejoiced to feel solid earth beneath their feet.

Columbus ordered the planting of the royal standard on the island that he named **San Salvador** (“Holy Savior”). With the flag of Spain in one hand, and a sword in the other, Columbus knelt and claimed the land for the Church and for the Catholic monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand.

In Search of Japan and China

Columbus had no idea that he had reached a new world—or that before him lay two great continents that were in no way part of Asia. Of course, Europeans had heard, at least, of the voyage of St. Brendan. But some thought the saint had found only some islands in the sea, while others (like Columbus) thought he had landed in Asia. Columbus believed that San Salvador must be some small island off the coast of that great continent. He was convinced that if he sailed only a little farther west, he would, perhaps, discover the fabled land of Japan. Once he found Japan, discovering the route to China would be simple.

Columbus had read about Japan and China in the writings of another Italian explorer named Marco Polo. About two hundred years before Columbus's voyage, Marco Polo had traveled east across Asia, into China, and over the sea to Japan. Marvelous were the tales Polo told about these lands! Both China and Japan were ancient, civilized societies. Besides the spices and rich silks one could find in those lands, there was gold! Marco Polo wrote that houses in Japan had roofs of gold.

Columbus discovered that the native people on the island of San Salvador were nothing like the highly civilized Chinese and Japanese. The people of San Salvador (called the *Taino* TYE•noh) lived in houses built of sticks and leaves. They wore few clothes, only a cloth around their loins. The Taino made pottery and were farmers, growing corn, yams, and other root crops.

Two days after landing at San Salvador, the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria* set sail in search of Japan. After sailing amid many small islands, Columbus and his men came upon the coastline of what was clearly either a large island or part of the coast of Asia. Columbus thought this might be Japan; but sailing up and down the coastline, he discovered no great cities, no gold. In early December, Columbus left this land behind (it was the island of Cuba) and sailed east. He found another large island and, more importantly, the first signs of gold.

The Taino natives on this island (today called Hispaniola) wore gold ornaments. Where did they find this gold, Columbus asked them? Guacanagri (Gwah•cah•nah•GREE), one of the Taino chiefs, told him that gold could be found on the island, in a place called Cibao (see•BAH•oh). Rejoicing at this news, Columbus planned to set sail for Spain to tell Isabella and Ferdinand of his discovery.

But before Columbus could set sail, the *Santa Maria* hit a reef and sank. With the help of the friendly Taino, Columbus and his men built a fortress for *Santa Maria*'s crew on the coast of Hispaniola. Since it was Christmastime, Columbus named this fort "Navidad" (Nativity).

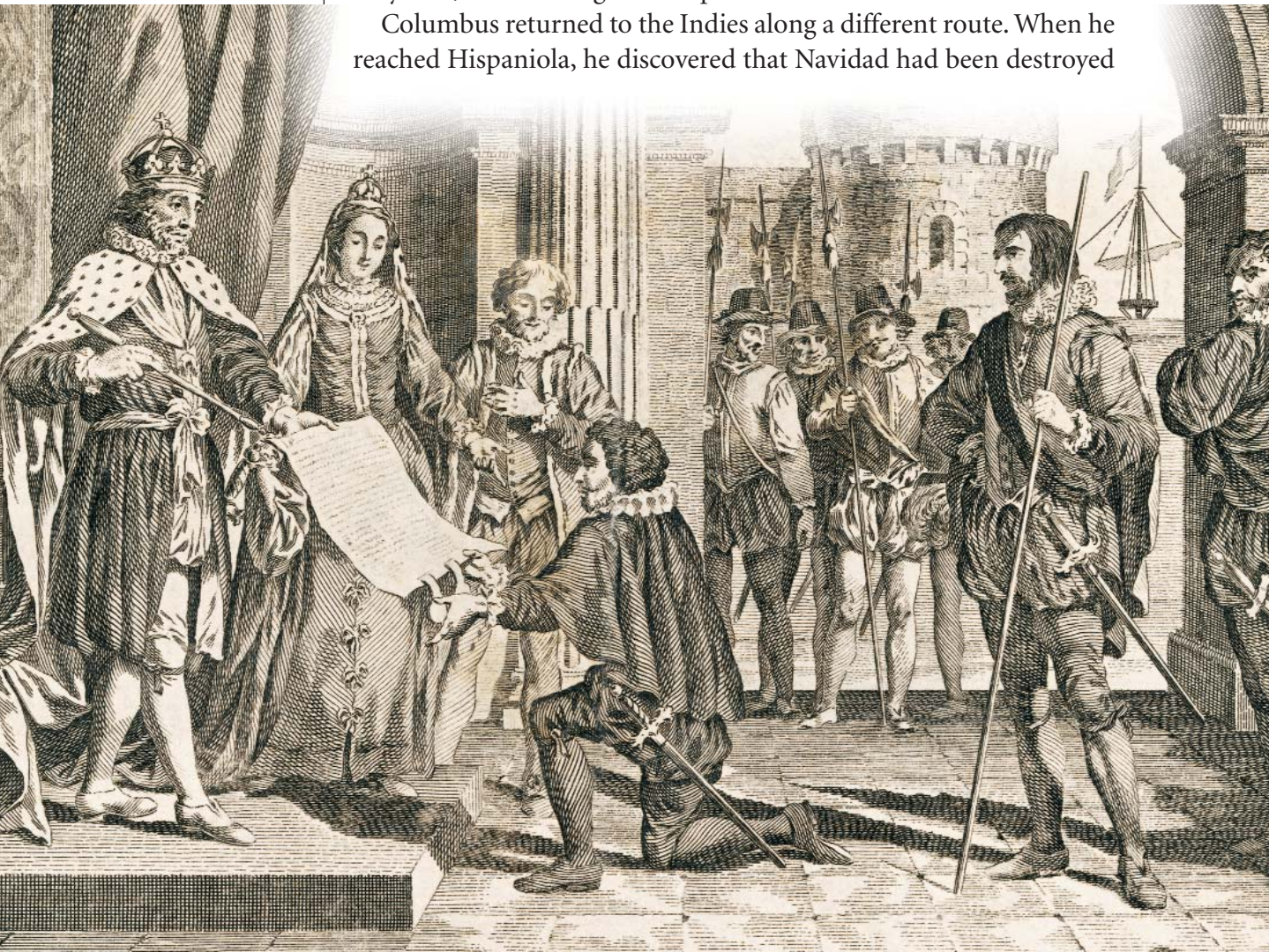
On January 16, 1493, Columbus set sail for Spain. The news he brought would turn the world upside down.

Settlement of the “Indies”

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella honored Columbus as a hero after he returned to Spain. Soon they were planning another voyage for him. This time, instead of 3 ships, they would give him 17. The Catholic Monarchs commanded Columbus to establish a trading settlement and to return with gold; but his more important task, they said, was to bring the Gospel of Christ to the natives overseas.

Columbus returned to the Indies along a different route. When he reached Hispaniola, he discovered that Navidad had been destroyed

**King Ferdinand and
Queen Isabella send
Columbus to America.**



Sharing the New World

Columbus had not been home long before news of his discoveries traveled over all Europe. Since everybody thought Columbus had found a route to China, Japan, and India, they called the new lands the “Indies,” and the people who lived there, “Indians.” The king of Portugal heard about the voyage, and probably was not happy with himself

for not having given Columbus ships when he had asked for them. To make sure no war broke out between Spain and Portugal over the newly discovered lands, Pope Alexander VI, on a map, divided the Atlantic with a line. All lands discovered east of that line should belong to Portugal, said the Pope; all lands west of the line should belong to Spain. The Pope told both kingdoms that their first duty was to bring the Catholic Faith to the “Indians.”

by the Taino. The Indians had destroyed the settlement because the Spaniards there had mistreated them. Columbus set up another settlement, calling it Isabela. Columbus had trouble with the settlers at Isabela; because they were so interested in finding gold, they spent no time in building homes, raising cattle, and farming.

On his second voyage Columbus again failed to find any signs of China or Japan. What’s more, he returned to Spain in 1496 without much gold.

In 1498, Columbus returned to the Indies and this time discovered a great continent. Though he thought it was part of Asia, it was really South America. So beautiful to Columbus was the coastline of this continent that he thought he had found the Garden of Eden! This voyage, though, brought Columbus great sorrow. Blamed for the bad condition of the settlement on Hispaniola, Columbus was chained like a prisoner and shipped back to Spain.

Columbus was not long in Spain before Queen Isabella released him. In 1502 she sent him again to the Indies. On this voyage, Columbus sailed along the coast of Central America, looking for a sea passage to India. Again he failed. He returned to Spain in 1504, where he spent the last two years of his life. Columbus died on May 20, 1506, still believing that the lands he had discovered were a part of Asia.

Other Spanish Explorers

Spain sent other explorers to the Indies besides Columbus. In 1499, one group of explorers, which included an Italian named Amerigo Vespucci (Ah•MAIR•ee•goh Ves•POO•chee), explored the northern coast of South America. There they found the mouth of a mighty river, which they named the Amazon. They also explored the coast of Florida and the eastern coast of North America. Because of a book that told of Amerigo Vespucci's voyages to the Indies, people in Europe came to call all the new lands **America**.

America: the name the Europeans gave the New World after reading about Amerigo Vespucci's voyages

One Spaniard became an explorer because he fell in love. Juan Ponce de León (Hwan PON•say day lay•OHN) was an older man who loved a beautiful young girl named Beatriz. Desiring to be young again so Beatriz would love him, Ponce de León went in search of the fountain of youth which, he heard, was on an island called Bimini. He landed on Bimini on Easter Sunday in 1513, and named it Florida, since, in Spain, Easter Sunday was called *Pascua Florida* ("Flowery Sunday"). He explored the eastern coast of this island (which is really a peninsula), but, alas, found no fountain of youth. Several years later, Ponce de León tried to found a settlement in Florida, but the Indians drove him off. Instead of finding youth in Florida, Ponce de León found death. He died from a wound he received in a battle with the Florida Indians.



Amerigo Vespucci



Balboa discovers the Pacific.

In 1513, the Spanish captain Vasco Núñez de Balboa (VAHS•coh NU•nyez day Bal•BOH•ah) and his men climbed a high peak in Darien (now known as Panama) and to the west saw a new ocean. This ocean, which Balboa called the "South Sea" (we call it the Pacific), clearly separated the "Indies" from Asia. Of course, Balboa could not see Asia across the South Sea, for that



Routes of Spanish explorers in the Americas: Amerigo Vespucci (1499), Ponce de León (1513), and Vasco Balboa (1513).

continent lay thousands of miles to the west. Balboa's discovery showed that Columbus had not discovered a new route to the rich lands of China, Japan, and India, but something far more important. Columbus had discovered a New World.

Chapter 1 Review

Summary

- Legends and ruins tell us of early explorations of America. St. Brendan of Ireland's fabled voyage was successfully reenacted in recent years. Stories tell us of the voyages and settlements of Leif Ericsson of Greenland and Madoc of Wales, and stone ruins in Newfoundland and the American South match these legends.
- In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed under the banner of Spain, for Ferdinand and Isabella. While searching for the Asian Indies, he discovered the Americas, but died thinking he had wandered near Asia and had failed to find the treasure of Japan, China, and the Indies.
- Later explorers saw awesome sights and learned that America was its own continent. Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean, and Ponce de León ventured into Florida. These explorers soon learned that while the treasures of Asia were far, far away, they had found something more important—land for their home countries to settle and colonize!

Chapter Checkpoint

1. St. Brendan, Leif Ericsson, Madoc, and Christopher Columbus each sailed west across the Ocean Sea. Name something each explorer hoped to find.
2. How did our continent come to be named America?
3. Who discovered the South Sea (now called the Pacific Ocean)?
4. What evidence supports the stories about Brendan's voyage, Vinland, and the Welsh colonists?
5. Which king and queen sponsored Christopher Columbus's voyage?
6. What are the *Santa Maria*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta*?
7. What happened on October 12, 1492?
8. What year was South America discovered? Which explorer found it?
9. What did Ponce de León discover on Easter Sunday, 1513? What does the name of that land mean?
10. Were explorers afraid they would fall off the Earth if they sailed across the Ocean Sea?

Chapter Activities

1. Think about why St. Brendan sailed west. Legends told of a "Land of Promise of the Saints," which lay westward across the ocean. Where do you think these legends came from? Do people still think of America as a Land of Promise?
2. Christopher Columbus died thinking he was a failure, because he had not found Japan and China. In fact, he has been remembered ever since for discovering America. What are some places and things that have been named after him?

The American Larder

Columbus took back maize (the Indian word for corn) to the Europeans. Until his voyage, maize had never been tasted in Europe. On November 5, 1492, Columbus wrote in his journal: "There was a great deal of tilled land sowed with a sort of beans and a sort of grain they call 'Mahiz,' which tasted good baked or dried, and made into flour."