

Who Was Henry Hudson?



Historians know very little of Henry Hudson's youth. He was probably born in or near the city of London sometime between 1560 and 1570. It is likely that his family was wealthy and that his grandfather founded a trading company called the Muscovy Company.

At some point in his life Henry married a woman named Katherine. They had at least three children including three sons named John, Oliver, and Richard. Henry grew up near the end of the Age of Exploration. Much of America was still uncharted.

Many countries and trading companies at the time were searching for a new route to India. Spices from India were worth a lot of money in Europe, but were very expensive to transport. Ships had to sail all the way around Africa. Many ships and their cargo were sunk or captured by pirates. If someone could find a better trade route, they would be rich.

Henry Hudson wanted to find a northern passage to India. He thought that, since the sun shined most of the summer on the North Pole, the ice there would melt in the summer. Perhaps he could sail right over the top of the world to India. Starting in 1607, Henry headed up four different expeditions searching for the elusive northern passage.

Henry set sail on his first expedition in May of 1607. His boat was called the Hopewell and his crew included his sixteen year-old son John. He sailed north up the coast of Greenland and to an island called Spitsbergen. At Spitsbergen he discovered a bay full of whales. They also saw plenty of seals and walruses. They kept going north until they ran into ice. Hudson searched for over two months to find a passage through the ice, but eventually had to turn back.

In 1608 Hudson once again took the Hopewell out to sea in hopes of finding a passage to the northeast over Russia. He made it as far as the island of Novaya Zemlya located far to the north of Russia. However, he once again encountered ice which he could not pass no matter how hard he searched.

Hudson's first two expeditions had been funded by the Muscovy Company. However, they now lost faith that he could find a northern passage. He went to the Dutch and soon had another ship called the Half Moon financed by the Dutch East India Company. They told Hudson to try to find a way around Russia again going to Novaya Zemlya.

Despite clear instructions from the Dutch, Hudson ended up taking a different route. When his crew nearly mutinied because of the cold weather, he turned around and sailed to North America. He first landed and met Native Americans in Maine. Then he traveled south until he found a river. He explored the river which would later be called Hudson River. This area would later be settled by the Dutch including an area on the tip of Manhattan which would one day become New York City.

Eventually the Half Moon could no longer travel up the river and they had to return home. Upon returning home, the King James I of England was angry with Hudson for sailing for another country. Hudson was put under house arrest and was told never to explore for another country again.

Hudson had many supporters, however. They argued for his release saying that he should be allowed to sail for England. On April 17, 1610 Hudson once again set sail to find the Northwest Passage. This time he was funded by the Virginia Company and sailed the ship Discovery under the English flag.

Hudson took the Discovery to North America sailing further north than he had on his previous expedition. He navigated through a perilous strait (Hudson Strait) and into a large sea (now called Hudson Bay). He was sure that a way to Asia could be found in this sea. However, he never found the way through. His crew began to starve and Hudson did not treat them well. Finally, the crew mutinied against Hudson. They put him and few loyal crew members into a small boat and left them adrift in the bay. Then they returned home to England.

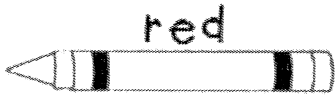
No one is sure what happened to Henry Hudson, but he was never seen from again. It is likely that he quickly starved to death or froze to death in the harsh cold weather of the north.

Name:

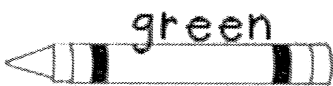
Directions: Using the passage, find the text evidence for each question. Underline the evidence in the passage with the assigned color, then write your answer.



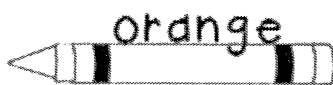
Why did Hudson believe he could sail right over the top of the world to India?



What did Hudson first do when he landed in North America?



Tell about the river that Hudson explored:



Tell how Hudson's crew mutinied against him?
