

Summary: A Northwest Passage

Searching for a Passage to Asia

In the 1500s and 1600s, explorers looked for a Northwest Passage through North America to Asia. They wanted a fast way to bring back riches from Asia. In 1497, the English king sent John Cabot to look for the passage. Cabot sailed to Canada, but he only found a rich fishing area. The French king also sent sailors to look for the passage. They did not find it, but they explored new lands.

Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence River in Canada. Giovanni da Verrazano explored the east coast of North America. Samuel de Champlain traveled up the St. Lawrence River. He started a fur-trading post called Quebec. Quebec was the first permanent French settlement in North America.

In 1606, a Dutch trading company sent Henry Hudson to find the passage. Hudson sailed up what is now the Hudson River in New York. The Dutch claimed the land in the areas Hudson explored. In 1610, Hudson explored for the English. He found what is now Hudson Bay in Canada. England claimed the land around Hudson Bay. None of the explorers found a Northwest Passage, but they did find lands with forests, rivers, and wildlife.

Spain and England

King Philip of Spain was angry with England. An English sea captain, Francis Drake, attacked many Spanish ships and took the gold and silver. He gave it to the Queen of England. The king was also angry because England was a threat to Spain's power in the Americas. Spain and England also had had religious differences. England broke away from the Catholic Church and became Protestant. King Philip wanted England to be Catholic again.

In 1588, the king ordered an armada of 130 warships to attack England. Francis Drake was ready for the invasion. The English ships sank many of the Spanish ships and defeated the Spanish Armada. Then they used their new power to claim more land in the Americas.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

claim *verb*, to declare something as your own

armada *noun*, a large fleet of ships

invasion *noun*, an attack by an armed force to conquer another country

After You Read

REVIEW What did John Cabot find during his exploration of Canada?

Circle the words that say what Cabot was looking for. Underline the sentence that tells what he found.

REVIEW Why did the king of Spain attack England?

Highlight three reasons why the king of Spain wanted to attack England.