

Henry Hudson

(?)–1611



WHY HE MADE HISTORY Henry Hudson was an English explorer who was famous for his voyages of discovery. Though he never found the sea passage he was seeking between Europe and Asia, he did sail farther north than any previous explorer.



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As you read the biography below, think about how Hudson's determination led him to make important discoveries.

By the early 1600s European merchants believed that a ship could reach Asia by sailing north, northeast, or northwest. They thought this route would be shorter than any other. In 1607 the English explorer Henry Hudson was hired by an English trading firm to find a northern sea route to Asia. Hudson, his son, and a crew of 10 men sailed from England on a ship called the *Hopewell*.

After several months, the crew reached an island north of Greenland. He was only about 700 miles from the North Pole, but thick ice made the waters **impassable**. Hudson was forced to give up his voyage and return to England without establishing a new trade route.

Hudson was still determined to find a northwest passage. In 1608 the same company hired Hudson to find the trade route. Once again the ship's route was blocked by ice, and Hudson returned to England.

Hudson found a new company to fund his travels. The Dutch East India Company had a new ship called the *Half Moon* commissioned especially for Hudson's use. With a crew of about 20 men, Hudson again headed northeast. Unfortunately, bad

VOCABULARY

impassable blocked

mutinied revolted; rebelled

weather caused problems, so Hudson turned west and sailed down the coast of North America. He and his men explored the eastern coast, sailing as far south as what is now North Carolina. Then Hudson and his crew traveled up what became known as the Hudson River. Holland made claims to land in North America based on this voyage. When Hudson and his men returned to England, their ship was seized and Hudson was ordered to serve only the country where he was born—England.

Further travels led Hudson on his final voyage in 1610. This time he sailed throughout the area known today as Hudson Bay. But, by winter his ship was frozen in, and a cold, miserable winter led to problems with the crew. By the middle of 1611, part of the crew **mutinied**. Hudson, his son, and seven other crew members were set adrift in a small boat. Some of the mutineers returned to England and were imprisoned. Hudson and the others were never seen again. Although Hudson did not discover a north-west passage, he did discover a route to the interior of North America that gave England claim to the Hudson Bay area.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Recall** What did Hudson contribute as a result of his travels?

- 2. Draw Conclusions** How did Hudson feel when he reached the ice and had to turn around? Why did he continue to explore?

ACTIVITY

- 3.** Photocopy a world map and trace the routes of Hudson's major explorations.