

EXPLORATIONS in the Americas

Following is an excerpt from *EPIC OF THE GREATER SOUTHWEST* by Rubén Sálaz M.

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Much has been written about the “European” exploration of the Americas. If you investigate the information below you will decide for yourself what country was responsible for most of the explorations in the Western Hemisphere.

Timeline: EUROPEAN EXPLORATION OF THE AMERICAS

790 A.D.

It is said that **Irish monks** reach Iceland while searching for retreats and new missionary lands.

874 A.D.

Norsemen (Vikings) led by **Eric the Red** settle in Iceland.

986:

The first Norse colony is planted on **Greenland**.

1000:

It is believed that **Leif Ericsson**, son of Eric the Red, stumbles upon the American continent when (it is sometimes said) he is blown off course while sailing from Norway to Greenland. He names the area Vinland (Wineland), now thought to have been Nova Scotia, because of the grapes he finds growing there.

1003-1006:

Thorfinn Karlsefni sets out from Greenland with three ships to settle Vinland. It is said he and his colony spent three winters somewhere on the American mainland—anywhere from Labrador to Florida—but no one is certain as to where.

1420s:

The **Norse colonies have disappeared** by around this time.

[The principal source for Norse exploration is derived from the *Norse Sagas* which are as often filled with tales of the fantastic. Artifacts have also been uncovered. For example, the Kensington Stone, found near Kensington, Minnesota, in 1898, records that Norsemen visited the area in 1362—by which one would have to accept a probable route from Hudson’s Bay up the Nelson River to its source at Lake Winnipeg and then crossing by a series of lakes and portages to central Minnesota. Depending on the writer, the Kensington Stone and various other artifacts have been labeled as authentic or forgeries.]

PORTUGAL, 1447-98:

Portugal under **Prince Henry the Navigator** (1394-1460) is mistress of the seas. (It is possible that by 1448 Portuguese mariners knew about the existence of South America.) The Portuguese **caravel**, a small vessel with broad bows, a high narrow poop (a raised deck at the stern of a sailing ship) and triangular lateen sails which aided sailing more efficiently against the wind, was crucial in this period of discovery, along with other inventions like the **magnetic compass**, the **astrolabe**, and **hydrographic charts** referred to as *portolani*. Henry sends expeditions down the west side of the African continent and also occupies the Azores, the Canaries, and Madeira.

1488: **Bartolomé Días** reaches the **Cape of Good Hope** (the southern tip of the African continent).

1498: **Vasco da Gama** sails around the Cape of Good Hope and reaches India, returning by the same route.

SPAIN, 1492:

Under Isabel of Castile and Fernando of Aragón, Spain sponsors *Cristóbal Colón*, **Christopher Columbus**, “Admiral of the Ocean Sea,” to encounter the Orient by sailing west. Columbus and his men stumble across the Americas on October 12, 1492, changing the history of the world for all time because in the Americas people of enterprise would have opportunities that in Europe were more or less controlled by the aristocracy. [See NOTE #1.]

SPAIN, 1493:

Columbus makes his second voyage to the New World. The expedition has 17 caravels and 1500 men in it.

ENGLAND, 1497:

Giovanni Caboto, usually referred to as **John Cabot**, a wealthy merchant from Genoa and Venice who had been living in England for some seven years, sends out expeditions that sail around southern Newfoundland in search of spices and other trade goods. [See NOTE #2.]

ENGLAND, 1498:

John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) and his son **Sebastian** sail to Greenland, then Labrador, and possibly around the area of what is now referred to as Delaware in New England. (Their trading efforts aren’t “successful” and John Cabot is never heard from again after 1499. Their expeditions apparently were authorized by “letters patent” from the English government.)

SPAIN, 1498:

Columbus makes his third voyage to the Americas.

SPAIN, 1499:

Peralonso Niño and **Cristóbal Guerra** lead an expedition to Venezuela where they discover the Pearl Coast. They return to Spain laden with pearls.

SPAIN, 1499-1500:

Alonso de Ojeda leads an expedition to the New World. With him are the famous pilot **Juan de la Cosa** and **Amerigo Vespucci**, the latter an employee of a Medici banking firm, now living in Seville. The mouth of the Amazon River is discovered.

PORTUGAL, 1499-1501:

Joao Fernandes, a noted seaman and small land owner of the rank of “*llavrador*,” from which is derived the name “Labrador,” sails to the Greenland area. In 1501 **Gaspar Corte-Real** got to Labrador and Newfoundland then got lost, which also happened to his brother **Miguel** when he came looking for Gaspar.

SPAIN, 1500:

Vicente Yáñez Pinzón reaches the coast of Brazil.

PORTUGAL, 1500:

Pedro Alvarez Cabral reaches the coast of Brazil.

SPAIN, 1501:

Rodrigo de Bastidas explores the coast of South America from Maracaibo to the Gulf of Darien

PORTUGAL, 1501-02:

Amerigo Vespucci, now sailing for Portugal, sails to the Cape Sao Roque area then reconnoiters the coast of what is now Argentina. In the published account of the voyage he describes the area as a “New World.” [See “Analysis,” NOTE #1.]

ENGLAND, 1501-05:

It is presumed that the “Anglo-Portuguese” group known as the “Company of Adventurers to the New Found Lands” makes annual fishing voyages to the coasts of what is now New England, and possibly down the coast to what will be known as the Middle Atlantic States. [See NOTE #2.]

SPAIN, 1502:

Columbus makes his fourth—and last—voyage to the Americas.

FRANCE, 1504:

French fishermen harvest fish from areas like Newfoundland.

SPAIN, 1508:

Sebastián de Ocampo circumnavigates Cuba, proving it isn’t part of the American mainland.

SPAIN, 1508-09:

Vicente Yáñez de Pinzón and **Juan Díaz de Solís** explore the coasts of Honduras and Yucatán.

SPAIN, 1513:

Juan Ponce de León discovers Florida. [See NOTE # 3.]

SPAIN, 1513:

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa pushes across the Isthmus of Panama and discovers the Pacific Ocean, the first European to see that body of water.

SPAIN, 1516:

Juan Díaz de Solis sails to the mouth of the Río de la Plata in Argentina.

SPAIN, 1517:

Francisco Hernández Córdoba and **Antonio de Alaminos** explore the Yucatán Península of Mexico.

SPAIN, 1518:

Juan de Grijalva explores the Mexican coast from Yucatán to the Pánuco River.

SPAIN, 1519:

Alvarez Pineda explores the Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Vera Cruz.

SPAIN, 1519-21:

Hernando Cortés conquers Mexico with the aid of Indian allies like the Tlaxcalan warriors.

SPAIN, 1519-22:

Ferdinand Magellan, (*Fernando Magallanes*, *Fernao de Magalhaes*) sails out of Spain intent on finding a strait to the Moluccas. In time he enters the *Mare Pacífico* and makes it to the Philippine Islands where he is killed in a skirmish with natives. Under the command of **Sebastián del Cano**, one of his ships, the *Victoria*, makes it back to Spain, completing the first ever circumnavigation of the globe.

SPAIN, 1521:

Francisco de Gordillo explores the Atlantic coast from Florida to South Carolina.

SPAIN, 1524:

Esteban Gómez explores the Atlantic coast from Florida to Nova Scotia.

FRANCE, 1524:

Giovanni de Verrazano (*Jehan de Varrasanne*) is sent to find a waterway across the American continent. He reaches New York Harbor, Narraganset Bay, and Nova Scotia before returning to France.

SPAIN, 1524-25:

Pedro de Quexos explores up the Atlantic coast as far as 40 degrees N.L.

SPAIN, 1526-30:

Sebastian Cabot sails to the Río de la Plata then explores the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers.

ENGLAND, 1527:

The English ship *Mary Guildford* explores the North American coast from Labrador to the West Indies.

SPAIN, 1528-1536:

An expedition led by **Pánfilo de Narváez** lands in the area of Tampa Bay, Florida, with a group of some 400 colonists. After unspeakable hardships, they decide to return to Mexico but suffer a shipwreck. **Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca** is among the handful of survivors who traverse (what is now) the southern USA to make it back to Mexico City. The account of his adventures causes great interest in northern exploration.

FRANCE, 1534, -35, -36:

Jacques Cartier explores south from Newfoundland, discovers the St. Lawrence estuary and what is now **Canada**, proceeds to the future sites of Quebec and Montreal. The fur trade is begun.

SPAIN, 1539:

Fray **Marcos de Niza**, a Franciscan, and a few men, including **Esteban** who had survived with Cabeza de Vaca, approach the Zuñi villages in New Mexico. They believe they have found the fabled "Golden Cities" of Cibola.

SPAIN, 1539-43:

Hernando de Soto lands an expedition of some 600 men in Florida and proceeds to explore the country as far west as Oklahoma.

SPAIN, 1539-42:

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado leads a force from Mexico into unknown territories as far north as Kansas. His men are the first to explore (what is now) northern Mexico, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma, the first to view sights like the Grand Canyon, new animals like the buffalo, and the Great Plains.

SPAIN, 1540:

Hernando de Alarcón sails from Acapulco up the Gulf of California (Sea of Cortés) and into the Colorado River in support of the Coronado expedition.

SPAIN, 1542:

Ruy López de Villalobos takes possession of the Philippine Islands for Spain.

SPAIN, 1542:

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sails up the California coast as far as San Francisco Bay and takes possession of the country for Spain. [See NOTE # 4.] Upon Cabrillo's death, **Bartolomé Ferrello** (Ferrer) continues as far north as Oregon.

SPAIN, 1564:

Legazpi takes possession of the Moluccas Islands. He founds Manila in 1571.

SPAIN, 1565:

Pedro Menéndez de Aviles founds the settlement of St. Augustine in Florida. Knowing that scurvy was a threat to the health of his crew during passage to the Americas, Aviles loads plenty of LIMES into his boat in the Canary Islands in order to combat the health menace. [See NOTE # 5.]

ENGLAND, 1576-1606:

Martin Frobisher makes three trips to the New World, looking for gold and the *Northwest Passage*. He finds neither. **John Davis** also makes three trips, with no success. **George Weymouth** and **John Knight** also make unsuccessful trips.

ENGLAND, 1577-80:

Though England and Spain are not at war, England's grasping Queen Elizabeth sends out **Francis Drake** to steal as much gold as possible from Spanish ships and settlements. Since the attacks are unexpected, Drake is successful in his thieveries and circumnavigates the globe in the process of fleeing from Spanish retribution and returning to England. (So Drake duplicates the earlier feat of Magellan in 1519-22.)

SPAIN, 1596:

Sebastián Vizcaíno establishes a colony at La Paz

1602: He reexplores the entire California coast and discovers Monterey Bay.

SPAIN, 1598:

Juan de Oñate leads a colony to New Mexico, *San Juan de los Caballeros* (Knights of St. John), some 1400 miles from Mexico City and perhaps 700 miles from Santa Barbara, the next closest Hispanic settlement. The settlement is surrounded by around 40,000 Pueblo Indians and much more numerous Navajo and Apache nations. Oñate explores the area from Kansas to the Gulf of California. **Santa Fe** is founded by around 1607-08.

FRANCE, 1603:

Samuel de Champlain makes his first voyage to Canada.

1604: Champlain makes his second voyage to Canada, leading a group of "gentlemen traders" interested in developing the fur trade.

1605: Champlain and his colonists build the first French settlement in North America on the shores of Port Royal Bay.

1608: **Quebec** is founded by Samuel de Champlain.

ENGLAND, 1607:

Jamestown, Virginia is founded as a trading center.

HOLLAND, 1609:

Henry Hudson is employed to search for the (non-existent) Northwest Passage. He explores coastal areas from Newfoundland to Virginia. In 1610 he sails through Hudson Strait and explores the east side of Hudson Bay.

SPAIN, 1629:

Father **Juan de Salas**, accompanied by Fr. Diego López and three soldiers, travels some 112 leagues east of Albuquerque (into what is now Texas) and makes contact with the Jumano Indians.

1632: Fr. Salas goes to the Jumanos once again, finding them by a stream of water named the *Nueces* (a branch of the Colorado River, probably the Concho), some 200 leagues southeast of Santa Fe.

FRANCE, 1642:

Montreal (*Ville Marie de Montréal*) is founded by settlers led by a devout young woman named Jeanne Mance and the valiant soldier Paul de Chomedey, *Sieur de Maisonneuve*.

SPAIN, 1659:

The Mission, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, is founded in **El Paso**, Texas, by **Fray García de San Francisco**.

FRANCE, 1673:

Louis Jolliet and **Father Marquette** go down the Mississippi as far as Arkansas.

FRANCE, 1678-82:

René Robert Cavelier de **La Salle** explores the area traversed by the Mississippi River, establishing important outposts like Fort Frontenac and Saint Louis in the process. France could now claim the interior of the North American continent, referring to it as "**Louisiana**" in honor of King Louis.

SPAIN, 1690:

The first Spanish settlements are established in Texas (El Paso was a part of N.M.), near the Nueces River.

RUSSIA, 1728-1741:

Vitus Bering, "a Dane in Russian service," makes a series of voyages in which he discovers the Bering Strait, explores the Aleutian Islands, discovers and names Mt. St. Elias.

SPAIN, 1768:

Fray **Francisco Hermenegildo Garcés**, a Franciscan, is the first European to visit the Pápagos at their Gila River village. He travels alone.

1770: Fray Garcés visits more Pápagos villages.

1771: Fray Garcés makes contact with the Yuma Indians and their great chief Salvador Palma. (Garcés crosses the deadly desert land twice.)

SPAIN, 1769:

Father **Junípero Serra** founds Mission San Diego, the first Spanish European settlement in the (Alta) California mission system, the beginning of modern California. [See NOTE # 6.]

SPAIN, 1774:

Juan Bautista de Anza leads an expedition from Sonora to Mission San Gabriel (CA.), thence over Portolá's trail to Monterey, California.

1776: Anza returns to Tubac and leads a successful colonizing expedition over burning deserts and snow-clad mountains to San Francisco, California.

[See NOTE # 7.]

SPAIN, 1776:

Father Silvestre de **Escalante** and Father Francisco A. **Dominguez** lead a 2,000 mile expedition ("without noise of arms") that explores regions of the Great Basin (now known as Colorado, Utah, and Arizona).

SPAIN, 1787:

Pedro Vial and **Cristóbal de los Santos** blaze a trail from San Antonio, Texas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

1787: **José Mares**, **Cristóbal de los Santos**, and **Alejandro Martín** duplicate Vial's feat in reverse, from Santa Fe to San Antonio.

SPAIN, 1792:

Pedro Vial, accompanied by **Vicente Villanueva** and **Vicente Espinosa**, blaze a trail to San Luis (St. Louis), Missouri. (Their route later becomes famous as the "Santa Fe Trail.")

ENGLAND, 1793:

Alexander Mackenzie crosses the North American continent from east to west (from the Montreal area to what is now British Columbia) and back again, the first Britisher to reach the Pacific Ocean overland.

UNITED STATES, 1803-06:

The **Lewis and Clark** Expedition, referred to as the "Corps of Discovery," goes down the Ohio River and up the Missouri. The men winter in the region of the Mandan Indians (near present Bismarck, N.D.). By November of 1805 they are in view of the Pacific Ocean and are back in St. Louis by September of 1806. [See NOTE # 8.]

DISCUSSION NOTES for EUROPEAN EXPLORATION OF THE AMERICAS

NOTE # 1

Because of the letters written by Amerigo Vespucci, a geographer named Martin Waldseemüller suggested the New World should be named "*America, because Americus discovered it*." Though it wasn't true, the name "*America*" caught on as the label for the New World, named after a bank clerk who happened to make a couple of voyages to the new lands discovered by Columbus.

NOTE # 2

A steady tenet of American historiography is that anyone now speaking English, no matter what nationality/ethnicity, is referred to as an "Anglo" if being written about in English and pertaining to the USA. Use of the ethnic label "Anglo" or "Anglo American" must be understood when studying Southwest history.

People who speak languages that evolved out of Latin are described as “Latins.” English, Norwegian, Icelandic, Swedish, Dutch, Afrikaans, Flemish, etc., developed out of German and are referred to as “Germanic languages” so why aren’t the people referred to as “Germanic”? The preferred label is *Anglo*, which supposedly connects someone to the (Germanic) tribe of Angles who entered England around the 5th century. When studying Southwest history one is certain to run across the phrase “Anglo-American” applied to all kinds of people, whether German, Irish, Italian, French, Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, etc. Is this merely a device to establish a “majority/minority” system? The implication that whole groups of immigrants, most of whom have Ellis Island as a heritage, are descended from the Germanic tribe of *Angles* who settled in England in the 5th century A.D., is ludicrous. The Angles were just one of the many Germanic groups who settled northern Europe. Saxons from Germany also went into England. Celts, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Suevi, etc., are just a few of other examples of Germanic groups who are ignored by using “Anglo” as if it was the only acceptable Germanic tribe. Is it anti-German prejudice that doesn’t permit American writers to use “Germanic” to describe themselves or other people from northern Europe? The “Anglo” connection to England is made even more tenuous when we observe that the people of England refer to themselves as “Brits,” not *Anglos*.

Why don’t we see “Hispano-Portuguese” or “Franco-Italian”? The Orwellian (from **George Orwell** who wrote the “classics” *ANIMAL FARM* and *1984* in which the use of language is recognized as more powerful as any weapon of mass destruction; Orwell structures, referred to as “Doublespeak” and “Doublethink,” are “employed to make lies sound truthful and can give wind the appearance of something solid”) and psychology aren’t applied to paladins from other countries. Further, English language writers generally point out that heroes like Ferdinand Magellan was really *Fernao Magalhaes*, a Portuguese who *merely happened* to be sailing for Spain. Likewise, *Jehan de Varrasanne*, a Florentine by birth who sailed under the French flag, is written about as Giovanni de Verrazano, while *Giovanni Caboto*, an Italian who sailed for England, is promoted as *John Cabot*.

It must be pointed out, especially when dealing with the Hispanic Southwest, that the “Anglo American” caricature is an Orwellian device intended to imply a connection with England, which is basically fantasy, as well as a sense of “*We’re the superior majority*” racism.

The preceding points aren’t intended as mere polemics. These perspectives should be discussed in an open, tolerant manner because they are as basic as they are crucial to understanding Southwest History.

NOTE # 3

One of the popular fantasies of American historiography is that Ponce de León was searching for the “Fountain of Youth” when he discovered Florida. This historical hoax is more indicative of Hispanophobia and is tantamount to asserting he was looking for Disney World. Youthful vigor has probably been a desirable trait throughout history but “Fountain of Youth” myths and legends can

be found in “King Arthur” fantasies but should never be promoted in valid historiography. Might it be an effective device in *propaganda*?

NOTE # 4

American historiography is often suspect because of its propagandistic cultural bias. A case in point is information provided in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN HISTORY*, 1965, edited by Richard B. Morris with Henry Steele Commager as Chief Consultant Editor. On page 23 we are told in Orwellian fashion that in 1542 Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo “...sailed up the California Coast to Drake’s Bay and took possession of the country for Spain.” Francis Drake (1543?-1596) might have been one year old at the time of Rodríguez Cabrillo’s discovery so how is it that reference is being made to “Drake’s Bay” some 37 years before Drake might have been on it? This ploy could be described as popular scriptography. It certainly isn’t valid historiography. It should also be clarified that the so-called “Drake’s Bay” (described by eye witness Francis Fletcher as having “white bancks and cliffes, which lie toward the sea” and quoted by Charles E. Chapman in *A HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA: THE SPANISH PERIOD*) is neither Bodega Bay nor San Francisco Bay.

NOTE # 5

Thus it was that Spain’s “Manila galleons” conducted trade with the Orient. Voyages were long, the food was bad, and scurvy was terrible until “...galleons sometimes stopped on the Sinaloa coast to find relief from citrus fruits” writes H.E. Bolton. Then he adds: “The story that the cure was first discovered by Captain Cook in 1776 is ANOTHER ENGLISH MYTH. In fact, two centuries earlier, Menéndez de Aviles, on his way from Spain to found St. Augustine in Florida, stopped at the Canary Islands for a supply of LIMES to prevent the ravages of SCURVY.” (Emphasis mine.)

It is at once astounding and appalling at how some writers have confused the historical record, endowing the people of England with achievements effected by people from other countries. It is so serious that this form of propaganda could be described as a recognizable pathology. Stuart Udall, author of *Majestic Journey*, writes that the Reverend Richard Hakluyt, author of *PRINCIPAL NAVIGATIONS, VOYAGES AND DISCOVERIES OF THE ENGLISH NATION*, was a master of this type of propaganda, so adept at it that he could be considered the “Father of English Propaganda.”

NOTE # 6

There are writers who have stated that California belonged to England by right of discovery because Drake supposedly was around San Francisco Bay in 1579. Few people are familiar with “the rest of the story” because if you investigate the historical record Drake was in reality the Osama bin Laden of the 16th century, stealing from and destroying Spanish ships and settlements, killing untold numbers of innocent people during his robberies.

England and Spain were not at war but England’s Queen Elizabeth I, an unsavory personality who, among other personal habits, bragged she had taken a bath only twice in her life, but routinely portrayed as good for the country, sent

Drake out to steal Spanish gold and silver wherever possible on the high seas or coastal settlements. Since no state of war existed, the pickings were easy, much like the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center. Francis Drake, billed as a “swashbuckler” to soften his record of thieveries, was a product of state sponsored terrorism. When Francis Drake returned to England his Queen made him a “Knight of the Realm” because he had been such a successful thief. Indeed, the stolen loot enabled the formation of the Bank of England and the East India Company so perhaps in England he was a “hero,” much like Osama bin Laden has been to his terrorist cohorts. “Sir” Francis Drake’s “swashbuckling” thieveries have been glossed over due to cultural bias, a bias that continues into the present day.

The Spanish Armada attacked Britain in 1588 because so many English pirates were preying on Spanish shipping but today Spanish motivation is generally attributed to “religious wars” in order to deflect England’s state sponsored terrorism of the day. Was Drake a hero because he stole from Spain and killed Hispanic people? Was Osama bin Laden because of 9-11-01?

English history has been protected by American historiographers so few people understand that England was the leading slave-trading nation of the Western world because she ruled the seas and slave trading earned huge profits.

The East India Company began shipping opium to China in 1773 and within some fifty years was making a profit of some four million pounds sterling a year from this drug trade. The Chinese government prohibited the importation or sale of opium but the British government did everything it could to promote it. [See page 125 in *GUNFIGHTERS, HIGHWAYMEN, AND VIGILANTES* by Roger D. McGrath.] By the 1830s the British treasury was earning three and a half million pounds sterling from the immoral trade. When the Chinese government made serious efforts to stop the influx of opium in 1838-39 the English waged the Opium War (1840-42) which resulted in an English victory. In the Treaty of Nanking, China was forced to open more of her ports to the English and cede Hong Kong. The British now had a base from which to pour opium into China.

English atrocities in places like Ireland, in the American colonies, India, etc., are unpublicized and the popular mind is led to believe that Spain and institutions like the Spanish Inquisition have been the principal perpetrators of the world’s enormous, inhuman cruelties. As Philip Wayne Powell has written in his classic *TREE OF HATE*, the printing press has been the most effective of all propoganda tools.

NOTE # 7

Anza’s achievement, blazing a trail to California then returning to Mexico and leading a colony to San Francisco Bay, is unparalleled in American history. H.E. Bolton and his school of historians are among the few who laud this great knight of the Southwest.

NOTE # 8

Black Legend literature generally reports information on the European diseases contracted by Native Americans basically where Spain and its people explored/settled. The issue of diseases appears to be reserved for Hispanic people in Spanish lands and is studiously avoided east of the Mississippi. For

example, the smallpox carried within the Lewis and Clark expedition, which all but exterminated the Mandan Indians, is seldom mentioned and never publicized.