

PART II

FURTHER INFORMATION ON SLIDE TOPICS

Further information, relating to topics covered in various slides, follows.
Numbers in parentheses match slide numbers as listed in Part I.

EARLY OCEAN EXPLORERS (5-7)

Since ancient times, there have been seafarers. Turning first to the shore for food, then voyaging to uncharted waters, many people have made their livelihoods from the ocean. Beckoned by the lure of bigger fish, the thrill of exploring new waters and discovering new lands, the temptations of riches from afar, the wealth to be gained in trading, and the opportunities for new lives, many turned to the ocean. Yet, for those who chose to make their living at sea, life also meant dangers, hard labor, separation from family, sickness, and even death.

Even so, the exploring spirit tugged men seaward. The first sea explorer known to history is Henu, an Egyptian who made a voyage about 2000 BC to the Land of Punt, on the Red Sea coast. Henu returned from this land laden with treasures of gold, ivory, and myrrh. Henu may not have been the first sea voyager, but with him begins the history of sea traveling. From the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians, who advanced the art of ship-building, to the adventurous and daring Vikings of the Middle Ages, explorers have sailed the ocean to find out what lay beyond familiar waters.

The greatest age of exploration began in Europe in the 1400's and lasted for the next 200 years. Pushed primarily by the desire to make fortunes by trading silks, spices, and luxuries from the Indies, Europeans charted new routes and eventually mapped the major seas and land masses of the world.

Each October we celebrate Columbus Day in memory of the explorer who is credited with discovering the New World. Christopher Columbus believed that the Atlantic Ocean was quite small and that Asia was much larger than it really is. He decided that the shortest route to the East must be westward from Europe across the Atlantic. This is how he came to sail to the New World. Columbus set sail on August 3, 1492, and on October 12 sighted land at San Salvador in the Bahamas. He was convinced that he had come to the East Indies. Nevertheless, we celebrate this day as the "discovery" of America.

Other explorers shared Columbus' belief that the land across the Atlantic was Asia, then around the early 1500's they began to question this view. Amerigo Vespucci is credited with recognizing this land as a whole new continent, later named "America" in his honor.

Still the quest for a westward route to the Indies continued to drive many explorers across the Atlantic. They explored much of North and South America. Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sailor, was one of the most famous explorers. Although he was killed in the Philippines some of his ships eventually became the first to sail around the world, making a long passage southwest to India.

Captain James Cook, a British naval officer, searched for a northwest passage to the Indies. As he traveled north along the west coast of North America, looking for a through passage, he explored the Pacific coast. Cook made three voyages to the Pacific between 1768-1776. On each of his voyages, he took along a scientist and an artist. Cook himself was a curious and perceptive observer of the life he saw on his voyages and he recorded his observations of plant, animal, and human life.

By the time of Cook's voyages, scientific exploration of the seas had become possible because of the invention of accurate instruments for determining location. Sailors were able to tell where they were by using a sextant to determine latitude and clocks to determine longitude.

Like Cook, many explorers in the early 1800's included nature studies in their voyages. Explorers began to look into the sea as well as across it. In 1872 the "Challenger" sailed from England to begin a 3 1/2 year study of the oceans. The ship's scientists made measurements, gathered observations of the sea, and took specimens of plant and animal life.

This expedition marked the start of a new age of exploration; the science of oceanography, the study of the marine environment, had been born.