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Everyday Life:
**EXPLORATION
& DISCOVERY**

WALTER A. HAZEN



GOOD YEAR BOOKS
Culver City, California

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Dedication

To Martha, Jordan, and Allison.

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Good Year Books
10200 Jefferson Boulevard
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Introduction

By the early 1400s, European civilization, which had been mired in the doldrums of the Middle Ages for almost 1,000 years, had slowly begun to change. Feudalism had ended for the most part, and strong national governments were beginning to emerge. In addition, the Italian Renaissance, with its emphasis on the present rather than the hereafter, was in full bloom. Although no one at the time used such terms, Europe was passing from the Middle Ages into Modern Times.

Another event that marked the beginning of modern history was the great Age of Exploration and Discovery, which began in the mid-1400s and continued almost to the end of the 1600s. Driven by the desire to find an all-water route to Asia, European nations engaged in a race to dominate world trade and foreign markets. Spain carved out a vast empire in the New World from Florida southward into Central and South America. Portugal took control of Brazil and acquired ports and trading posts in India and Africa. France laid claim to land in Canada and in the areas of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. The Dutch seized the Spice Islands in the East Indies and established settlements in what later became New York and Delaware. Finally, the English founded what in time became the 13 original English colonies along the Atlantic Seaboard in North America.

Each chapter of this book is followed by four pages of activities. Some test a student's ability to think creatively; others measure skills in math, vocabulary, and other subject areas. In addition, the book includes numerous arts-and-crafts activities, and there are even a few puzzles. Students should find *Everyday Life: Exploration and Discovery* enjoyable.

Walter A. Hazen





Early Explorations

Europeans in the 1400s did not just decide that they were bored with their humdrum existence and therefore strike off to explore distant horizons. On the contrary, since the beginning of time people have probably wondered what lay just over the next hill or waterway. They would not be human if they did not.

Among the first seafarers and explorers were the Minoans, or Cretans. They established a highly developed civilization on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean some 3,000 years before the birth of Christ. How advanced were the Minoans? Advanced enough to have running water, baths, and toilets that flushed. Compare this to Europeans of the Middle Ages, who used chamber pots and bathed in wooden tubs, if they bathed at all.



Ancient ruins on the island of Crete.

During the height of their existence, the Minoans sailed southeast some 200 miles and established a flourishing trade with Egypt. This trade provided the wealth that made Crete a Mediterranean power for many years. Minoan civilization flourished until about 1400 B.C., when its capital city, Knossos, was destroyed in an earthquake. At about the same time, the island of Crete was overrun by barbaric invaders from the north. These invaders would in time become the Greeks.

The next ancient people to explore distant lands were the Phoenicians. Phoenicia, which controlled the Mediterranean world from 1000 to 700 B.C., was located where Lebanon and western Syria are today. Phoenician sailors became great traders and colonizers. They established colonies on the shores of the Mediterranean in north Africa, Spain, and Sicily. Their greatest colony was Carthage in north Africa, which in time rivaled Rome for supremacy in the Mediterranean. It was the Phoenicians who helped spread the culture and learning of Egypt and Mesopotamia into what later became Europe.





In 470 B.C., the Phoenician colony of Carthage sent General Hanno, a statesman and navigator, to explore Africa's west coast and found colonies there. Leading what must have been the greatest expedition up to that time, Hanno set sail with some 60 galleys packed with more than 30,000 men. All went well at first. Groups of men disembarked along the way and established settlements in northwest Africa, as well as the upper portion of west Africa. But when Hanno reached the Senegal River area at the center of the western coast, his string of uncontested landings came to an end.

When Hanno sent a landing party ashore to look over this newly selected spot, his men were set upon by screaming natives, who pelted the invaders with rocks and stones. Hanno and his men beat back the natives and hastily constructed a camp. Their attempt at founding a colony was doomed, however. The constant beat of native tom-toms and the menacing growls of wild animals kept the Carthaginians on edge. The crowning blow came one morning when a large group of screaming gorillas accosted the camp, terrifying the inhabitants, who believed the beasts to be a race of huge savages. (Hanno later reported that his men captured some of the "women" but that the "men" got away.) This confrontation with the gorillas was enough to make Hanno and his group dash for their ships and return to Carthage in record time.

At about the same time that Hanno was attempting to establish settlements for Carthage, a Greek writer named Herodotus was making his own mark, as a historian and world traveler. Herodotus traveled widely through the Middle East and north Africa, recording what he had seen in such places as Babylon, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. He also visited Italy and parts of northern Europe. He further added to the geographical knowledge of the day by confirming that the Black and Caspian seas were enclosed bodies of water. Because of his detailed history of the Persian Wars between Persia and the Greeks, Herodotus is known as the "Father of History."

An important explorer of this time period was Alexander the Great, although he is known more for his conquests than his explorations. From 336 to 323 B.C., he conquered most of the known world. His vast empire extended more than 3,000 miles from his native Macedonia to the Indus River in India. Included within this vast realm were the Greek city-states, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the huge Persian Empire, the conquest of which Alexander completed in 331 B.C. Wherever Alexander went, he built great cities and spread Greek culture. He also sent back information on the lands he explored and conquered to his old tutor Aristotle, one of ancient Greece's greatest philosophers.





Of all ancient peoples, the Romans were the least interested in exploration and discovery. This was no doubt due to their having such a large empire to control and administer. But they did have their moments. A Roman navigator named Hippalus sailed from the Red Sea to the southwest coast of India. More importantly, he was the first to discover that winds known as monsoon winds

blew toward India during the winter and Africa during the summer. This knowledge made trips to and from India considerably shorter. Roman traders also reached Ceylon and discovered Cochin China (now part of Vietnam) sometime during the second century A.D.

Perhaps the bravest of early explorers were the Vikings. The Vikings lived in northern Europe, in what later became the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Denmark, and



A Viking warrior. The Vikings spread terror throughout Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Sweden. In the 800s and 900s they spread terror throughout Europe, raiding and pillaging coastal villages from France to Russia. Then, near the end of the 900s, they crossed the Atlantic and became the first explorers to touch land in North America.

The first Viking expedition to sail west across the Atlantic was led by Eric the Red. Eric, whose real name was Eric Thorwaldson, was a Norseman, or native of Norway. In 985, he crossed the Atlantic and set foot on a large island in the Arctic Circle off the east coast of Canada. He named the island Greenland because it was so green. The settlements Eric founded there lasted for some 400 years, after which the inhabitants either died out or returned to Norway. Today, Greenland, the world's largest island at 840,000 square miles, is a possession of Denmark.

About the year 1000, Eric the Red's son, Leif Ericson, became the first explorer to touch land in what later became the United States. Therefore, it could be argued that he and not Christopher Columbus discovered the New World. In any event, Leif left Greenland and discovered Newfoundland, after which he proceeded along the coast to what is now Massachusetts. Some





historians believe that he may have sailed as far south as New Jersey and Virginia. Leif called the lands he visited Vinland because of the grapes he found growing there. In some historic chronicles, Vinland is referred to as Vineland or Wineland.

Leif Ericson stayed in Vinland for a few months, marveling at the fertile countryside. He then returned to Greenland, where the tales he told of a “new and rich country” stirred interest in further exploration. As a result, the Vikings made two attempts to colonize Vinland. The first might have succeeded except for a freak occurrence. After initially getting along well with the natives of the region, Viking sagas relate that one day a bull got loose and attacked a group of Indians. The Indians viewed this occurrence as an unfriendly act on the part of the Vikings, whereupon they made war on their previously welcomed visitors. Hopelessly outnumbered, the Vikings had no choice but to retreat and leave the island.

A second attempt to colonize Vinland never got off the ground. When the Vikings landed, the Indians attacked them and drove them back to their ships. This ended the Vikings’ hope of establishing further settlements in the New World. One more Viking ship did touch ground in Vinland in 1347, but its crew was only searching for wood. After the crew completed its task, the ship departed.

But what about the Minnesota Vikings of the National Football League? Doesn’t their team name prove that the Norsemen pushed as far inland as Minnesota? Maybe and maybe not. A stone found on a farm near Kensington, Minnesota, contains writing that supposedly verifies a Viking visit in 1362. Although some authorities say the stone is authentic, others maintain it is a hoax. What do you think?



A statue of the great Viking leader Leif Ericson. What personal qualities does the statue seem to convey?





Name _____ Date _____

Name Those Explorers

Fill in the blank before each statement with a name from the word box. Several names are used more than once.

Alexander the Great

Eric the Red

General Hanno

Herodotus

Hippalus

Leif Ericson

Minoans

Phoenicians

Romans

Vikings

1. _____ Their civilization was centered on the island of Crete.
2. _____ They founded Carthage in north Africa.
3. _____ He is called the "Father of History."
4. _____ His expedition was attacked by screaming gorillas.
5. _____ He proved that the Black and Caspian seas are enclosed bodies of water.
6. _____ His empire extended all the way from Macedonia to India.
7. _____ He discovered that the monsoon winds blow in opposite directions at different times of the year.
8. _____ They discovered Cochin China.
9. _____ He gave Greenland its name.
10. _____ They came from the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.
11. _____ He called the area he explored Vinland.
12. _____ He was the first explorer to come ashore on land that later became the United States.
13. _____ Of all ancient peoples, they were the least interested in exploration.

